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ABSTRACT

This report contains two volumes: "Building Systems for Advancement to Self-Sufficiency," and "An Analysis of Change in Two Community Colleges." Volume 1 addresses the following topics: (1) the need and opportunity for change; (2) from promising practices toward systems for advancement; (3) institutional change strategies; (4) levers for change--policy, partnerships, and leadership; and (5) external stakeholders. Issues include: 80% of family-sustaining jobs require college-level skills, but only 67% of American students graduate from high school and 42% graduate with college-level skills; and low-income workers need to get economic benefits while earning credits toward long-term credentials. Volume 2 ponders the following questions: (1) Who and what have been the drivers of change? (2) How are internal leaders and external stakeholders engaged in moving toward a pathway approach to serving low-income individuals? and (3) What intervention strategies would move the community college to a fuller implementation of a pathway approach? Issues include: at Portland Community College, 54% of Cascade's student population tests into developmental classes; and at Central Piedmont Community College, the adult literacy program serves over 4,000 students. The paper also analyzes change and growth in programs. (Contains 62 references.) (NB)

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Driving Change in Community Colleges

Volume 1: Building Systems for Advancement to Self-Sufficiency

Volume 2: An Analysis of Change in Two Community Colleges

By Marty Liebowitz, Leslie Haynes, and Jane Milley

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VOLUME 1

Building Systems for Advancement to Self-Sufficiency

Introduction

Across the country, policymakers and advocates for the poor are recognizing that community colleges can play a pivotal role in improving the options for success and advancement available to low-income Americans. In many communities, this institution is well-situated to connect community development, educational opportunity, economic development, and preparation for career advancement. Entrepreneurial, rooted in regional economies, and relatively non-elitist, the community college has been garnering increased interest as a key to increased opportunity for many poor Americans.

This report was prepared by Jobs for the Future for the Ford Foundation, which has recently invested in several studies that identify promising practices among community colleges for serving low-income people, as well as other studies that identify the obstacles to greater engagement of community colleges in this agenda.

This report to the foundation identifies high-leverage strategies that can accelerate institutional change and innovation in community colleges to better serve low-income youth and adults.[1] We identify promising practices in community colleges to help low-income youth and adults advance to self-sufficiency. And we analyze institutional change strategies that can promote the adoption of strategies for creating pathways for advancement—that is, programs combining work and learning to help low-income people of all skill levels move beyond poverty and toward family self-sufficiency.[2]

Driving Change in Community Colleges addresses two key questions:

- What high-leverage strategies can change the alignment of forces, pressures, mandates, and incentives that make it hard for promising practices to diffuse widely and reach significant scale?

- What strategies can help promising practices grow and achieve greater scale—and which key players, among both external stakeholders and internal leadership, can be catalysts to significant institutional change?

The focus of this study is strategies for improving the capacity of community colleges to help low-income youth and adults gain the skills, credentials, and connections necessary to move out of poverty to self-sufficiency and beyond.

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[1] The phrase "low-income youth and adults" refers here to current and former welfare recipients, low-wage workers, out-of-school youth, and high school graduates who are not prepared for postsecondary education.

[2] All skill levels begins with people who have basic skills below the eighth grade level and face multiple barriers to education and employment. Family self-sufficiency is the amount of money working adults need to meet their family's basic needs without public or private subsidies. It is significantly higher than the federal poverty level and the minimum wage

Our interest is improvement in both the core education program and the non-degree, non-credit "shadow college" so that low-income individuals can benefit from an integrated progression from entry at a very low skill level to an academic degree and transfer to a four-year college.

Community colleges are of particular interest and significance precisely because they can be a gateway to higher-wage employment and to credentials that have value in the labor market. However, it requires concerted effort, planning, and leadership for colleges to make the most of their unique institutional position to help low-income individuals succeed, particularly the hardest-to-serve with low skills and multiple barriers to education and employment. Yet the importance of setting self-sufficiency as the goal cannot be overstated. Low standards inevitably lead to low performance. Only a standard of self-sufficiency will drive change in community colleges that promotes advancement beyond working poverty.

To identify high-leverage change strategies, Jobs for the Future conducted an intensive review of research about community colleges (see Bibliography and References, page I-42) and interviewed many of the authors of that research. We also interviewed a broad range of external stakeholders and community college leaders (see list of interviews, page I-45) and prepared case studies of two community colleges that demonstrate promising practices (see *Volume II: An Analysis of Change in Two Community Colleges*).

The research yielded four major findings:

- Community colleges have a significant untapped potential to promote economic development and help low-income people advance to self-sufficiency. To realize this potential on a larger scale, institutional change is needed.

- Promising practices can be found in a number of community colleges around the country, but these efforts tend to be small, isolated, and not very comprehensive. While we found components of pathways to advancement, we did not find institutionalized pathways, operating at scale, that enable low-income people of all skill levels advance to self-sufficiency and beyond.

- Colleges can move with relative alacrity, creativity, and seriousness of purpose. However, three forces can influence the ability of an individual college to take on this agenda for large numbers of students: *policy*, *partnerships*, and *leadership* are key levers that external players and internal community college leadership can use to drive change.

- The likelihood of success is greatest when external stakeholders and internal leadership work together toward a common vision.

Jobs for the Future has built upon its research findings to develop two conceptual models based on composites of promising practices. The first, a

model of *Pathways for Advancement to Self-Sufficiency*, identifies the practices necessary to promote advancement from poverty to self-sufficiency. The second, an *Institutional Change Strategy* model, identifies the key players that must be engaged and the change strategies they can employ. The model focuses on engaging external players and internal leaders to use policy, leadership, and partnerships as levers to drive institutional change.

Volume I addresses the following topics:

Part 1: The need and opportunity for change;

Part 2: From promising practices toward systems for advancement: a composite of promising community college practices;

Part 3: Institutional change strategies: a composite of promising change strategies;

Part 4: Levers for change: policy, partnerships, and leadership; and

Part 5: External stakeholders: organizing and advocacy groups, employers and business organizations, political leadership, community-based organizations, and national associations of community colleges and state governments.

Those findings and the analysis deriving from them are the basis for the final section: recommendations regarding high-leverage investment strategies that can accelerate institutional change in community colleges.

Although originally commissioned by the Ford Foundation, we offer the following recommendations to a broad audience of policymakers, practitioners, and funders in this field:

- *Comprehensive state/local innovation initiatives*: We recommend a multi-year, multi-site demonstration project that engages state/local teams in strengthening state policies and institutional practices that promote the advancement of low-income populations.

- *Education and support for advocacy community*: We see great value in investments that can expand efforts by the advocacy community to promote change in community college policy and practice that can help low-income individuals advance. Lack of engagement by the advocacy community is a missing opportunity for influence and impact.

- *Incubation of new and expanded community college models and partnerships for advancement:* Practice is still evolving in ways community colleges can promote advancement, and new models are still needed. Community colleges cannot create pathways to advancement by themselves; structured partnerships are essential. We recommend a two-pronged investment

strategy. One, we recommend investing in a group of leading colleges with the explicit goal of helping them build on their exemplary programs to expand the scope of education and career path progression. We also recommend supporting a small number of business organizations or community initiatives to promote comprehensive workforce system reform by developing partnerships that can move colleges and their communities to better help low-income people advance.

The recommendations are solely the views of Jobs for the Future and do not imply either endorsement or commitment by the Ford Foundation to support any of these proposals.

Part 1.
Need and Opportunity for Change

Community colleges are the institution with the greatest potential to improve education and training for low-income and less-skilled youth and adults. They have a long history of dealing with less-successful students, many of whom need remediation. They have resources and credibility with government, employers, and other key stakeholders. They provide relatively inexpensive postsecondary education, leading to credentials with value in the labor market. In the world of higher education, community colleges are relatively entrepreneurial and flexible.

For those working to make effective education and training services more readily available to low-income Americans, institutional change in community colleges across the core education and non-degree or non-credit programs is a high priority.

Fortunately, the interests of three major stakeholders can potentially align to support such an agenda:

- *Low-income individuals and their advocates*: Many low-income people could be well-served by community colleges through access to programs that build skills, grant credentials, and provide connections to move out of poverty toward self-sufficiency and beyond. Many low-income people lack the skills and credentials for family-supporting career employment. Postsecondary credentials are replacing the high school diploma as gatekeeper for economic opportunity. However, while 80 percent of family-sustaining jobs require college-level skills, only 67 percent of American students even graduate high school and only 42 percent graduate with college-level skills (McCabe 2000). The problem is greater for low-income people. Only 6 percent of students with family incomes below $25,000 who graduate high school and attend postsecondary education receive a bachelor's degree (Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance 2001).

- *Employers and their organizations*: Skill shortages are a significant obstacle to economic growth and development in certain industries and communities across the United States, even in the current slowdown. Although economists debate the existence of a skills gap and the extent to which and speed at which it is widening, employers in many industries are frustrated by their inability to find and keep qualified workers for sub-baccalaureate jobs. They are looking for dependable, relatively inexpensive sources of both well-prepared new employees and incumbent worker training. To the extent that community colleges can provide those services, the interests of employers align with those of less-skilled job-seekers.

- *Community colleges and their leaders:* Community colleges themselves face mounting pressures to change. For years, they have faced declining enrollments in traditional degree programs and resources. They now meet

> mounting competition from distance learning, for-profit universities, and corporate universities. Moreover, their student population is changing in ways that pose challenges. Students are becoming older, more intermittent and part-time, more likely to need to balance school with work and family, and in greater need of remediation and ESL services. Significant changes in welfare and workforce systems require community colleges to adopt new roles. Employers require higher skills at every level and want programs and credentials focused on those skills, not on time spent in courses with grades graded pass or fail. The need for transferable academic and high performance competencies as well as occupational technical skills is blurring the line between education and training.

The question is not whether community colleges will change; it is whether they will change in ways that meet the needs of low-income people for advancement, the needs of business and political leaders for economic development, and the needs of community colleges to maintain enrollment and funding to continue to fulfill their mission.

In making colleges more friendly to, supportive of, and able to serve hard-to-employ youth and adults, however, this potential alliance of interests confronts a range of challenges. Many low-income people face individual barriers that pose significant obstacles to access, retention, and advancement. Most low-income students have limited financial resources and need financial support, not just to pay tuition but to support themselves and their families. After grants and loans, low-income students attending community colleges have greater unmet financial needs than do higher-income students attending private four-year colleges (Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance 2001). Many low-income people have to work to make ends meet, and they need to get immediate economic benefits while earning credits toward long-term credentials. A significant number of low-income people lack the academic and soft skills necessary for postsecondary education.

These barriers point to a set of new programmatic and policy innovations that must be implemented if large numbers of low-income individuals are to succeed in a community college environment.

Part 2.
From Promising Practices Toward Systems for Advancement

Jobs for the Future's research found much that is innovative, impressive, and exciting in different colleges around the country. We found promising practices and components of pathways to advancement in a number of colleges. However, we did not find evidence that many colleges have made a deep commitment to large-scale development of comprehensive pathways that enable low-income people of all skill levels to advance to self-sufficiency.

Some community colleges demonstrate promising practices for preparing people with very low skills for quality entry-level employment—but they do not provide pathways to advance all the way to self-sufficiency. Others demonstrate promising practices for career ladder advancement for incumbent workers who already have higher skill levels—but they do not provide pathways that enable low-income people with low skills to reach the bottom rung of the career ladder. Lack of navigation systems that "connect the dots" is also a major obstacle to advancement.

Based on its research findings, Jobs for the Future created a model of a comprehensive approach to providing advancement to self-sufficiency for people who enter at every skill level. The *pathways to advancement model*, which is a composite of promising approaches, includes several key principles and practices:

- *Advancement to self-sufficiency for people entering at all skill levels is a core mission and benchmark for performance.* Career ladder advancement to family-supporting career employment is an overarching principle of state education and workforce policy in California and Washington.

- *Policy provides financial aid and access to education at all skill levels.* CalWORKS, the California welfare system, pays for tuition and books for welfare recipients and other low-income people.

- *Structured outreach, support services, and convenient scheduling and location achieve high levels of access and retention.* Central Piedmont Community College offers courses in a large number of locations throughout the community. A significant portion of TANF recipients in Washington attend courses in the evening or on weekends. Portland Community College in Oregon operates a One-Stop Career Center on campus, and it provides staff for centers in the community.

- *Remediation programs linked to career pathways provide a visible bridge to postsecondary education.* Basic skills preparation is a clearly identified step to work and advancement in targeted careers. Portland Community College, the Salt Lake City Skills Center, and Community College of Denver Essential

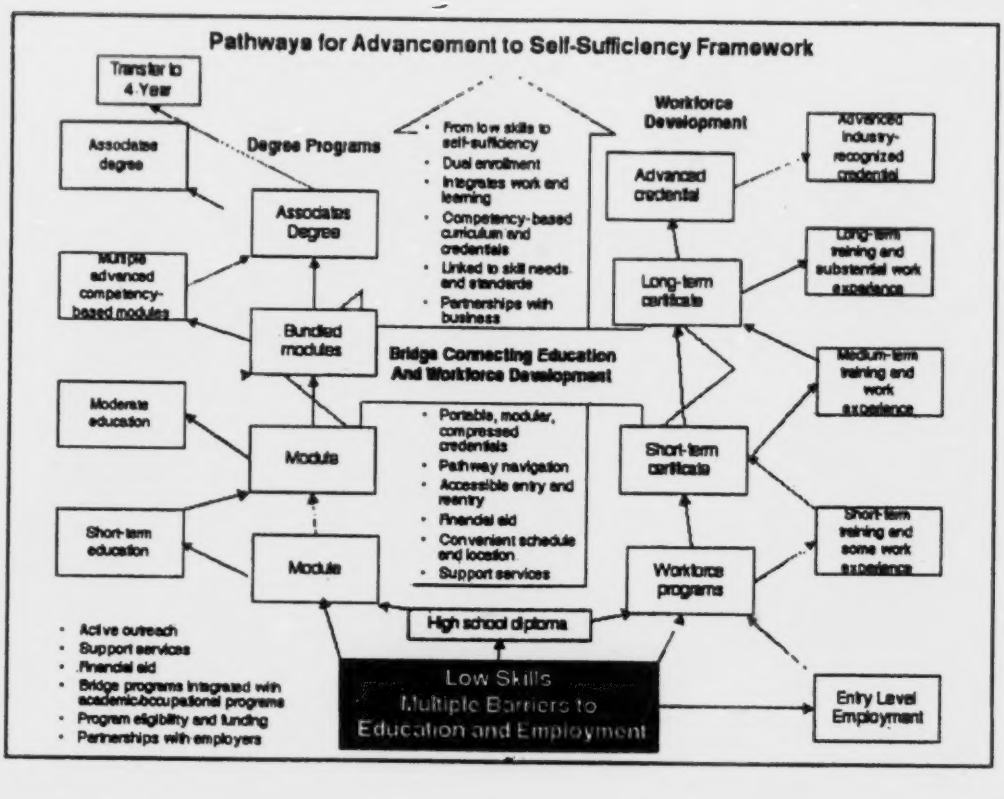
Skills Program provide quality remediation and developmental education directly linked to career pathways.

- *Learning communities, integration of academic and career education, and contextual learning enable students with diverse learning styles to succeed.* Many students at LaGuardia Community College in New York City participate in learning communities organized around career pathways. Sinclair Community College in Ohio has made contextual, project-based learning a pervasive instructional practice.

- *Partnerships with business link education and career advancement.* Partnerships with employers and business organizations align curriculum and credentials to labor market skill needs and standards, provide career ladder advancement, and provide market demand for customized training. Customized education and training for employers at Central Piedmont Community College in North Carolina and Macomb Community College in Michigan and Washington State's Shoreline career ladder system demonstrate how such partnerships have a positive impact on students, employers, and the community colleges themselves.

- *Accelerated, modular credentials valued by employers allow students to earn credits toward certificates and credentials while gaining immediate economic benefits.* Central Piedmont Community College is developing accelerated credentials that enable students to more quickly reach milestones that help them get a job, get a better job, or get higher pay. The California state community college system provides funding for developing compressed programs linked to labor market needs.

- *Pathways with multiple points of entry and reentry and effective navigation systems help students chart a course to self-sufficiency by combining work and learning.* The Shoreline Community College career ladder system creates long-term career progression pathways that move students toward successively higher levels of skills, responsibility, and wages. Shoreline's passport system helps students see where they are and make plans for taking next steps toward self-sufficiency. Washington targets a portion of TANF funds for community colleges to create career ladder systems.



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Part 3.
Institutional Change Strategies: Breaking the Culture of Inertia

Jobs for the Future found a significant potential for community colleges to help low-income people of all skill levels advance to self-sufficiency and beyond. They provide an open door to low-cost postsecondary education; combine education and workforce development; and provide a broad range of credentials that can promote advancement at every skill level to self-sufficiency. Connections to K-12 education and university systems, economic and workforce development programs, employers and business organizations, and community organizations position community colleges at the center of education and workforce development. No other public institution has the resources or provides the same range of services to promote advancement all the way from entry-level with low skills to self-sufficiency and beyond. If advancement for low-income people on a large scale is the goal, it can be met in part through institutional change that enables community colleges to realize their potential for helping low-income people gain the skills, credentials, and connections necessary to open the door to economic opportunity.

However, barriers within community colleges and beyond their walls stand in the way of realizing this potential on a large scale. A pervasive culture of inertia is an obstacle to the kinds of change in community colleges and other institutions that would enable community colleges to promote advancement for low-income people on a large scale. Internal structures and external policies combine to make community colleges a fragmented institution in which advancement for low-income people is often a low priority.

The challenge is how to transform community colleges into a comprehensive institution with a central focus on advancement toward credentials that have value in the labor market and allow transfer to four-year colleges. Key internal and external barriers, together with promising approaches to breaking these barriers, include the following:

> *Barrier:* Lack of a common vision for workforce and economic development

Promising Practices: A clear focus on economic development has been the central mission of North Carolina's community college system since its founding. State economic development policy and funding make community colleges the central vehicle for economic and workforce development. The 108-campus California Community Colleges is developing a common vision for the economic and workforce development role of community colleges throughout the system.

> *Barrier:* Limited connections to community-based organizations and the workforce system

Promising Practices: Longstanding partnerships with employers and business organizations, as well as a central role in the workforce system, provide a

foundation for large-scale, customized training for employers in Macomb Community College and Central Piedmont Community College. Strong connections with employers and business organizations drive the Shoreline Community College system that provides a pathway for low-income students to advance toward self-sufficiency by combining work and learning.

Barrier: Lack of incentives and resources to promote advancement

Promising Practices: Policies, core funding, and mission are often out of alignment with what community colleges actually do: they focus on degree programs, which comprise a shrinking part of the community college mission. The emphasis on economic development in North Carolina state policy and funding aligns with the central mission of the community college system. Some colleges, such as Macomb Community College, have created entrepreneurial shadow colleges that provide economic and workforce development services by attracting a broad range of public and private funding targeted to delivery of services.

Barrier: Lack of stable funding for advancement

Promising Practices: Innovative programs that support advancement for low-income people typically rely on temporary, soft money, and the programs often disappear when funding ends. Portland Community College supports innovations through a patchwork quilt of government programs and foundation grants. Highly promising programs for low-income people, such as the La Guardia College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment, have been eliminated or reduced in scale and quality as a result of decreases in state funding linked to specific programs (Fitzgerald 2000). Oregon, however, counts all students as FTEs in allocating core funding, and North Carolina provides core funding for participants in workforce development programs.

Barrier: Fragmented funding streams

Promising Practices: Multiple funding streams support a broad range of isolated programs; rarely is there support for systems that connect the dots. California is working to build a comprehensive economic development and workforce system that will make it easier for community colleges to integrate resources to develop of pathways to advancement. Washington State allocates funding to create career ladder systems that connect programs into coherent pathways.

Barrier: Lack of connections among public agencies

Promising Practices: Lack of systemic connections among state agencies drives fragmentation within community colleges. In California, a comprehensive state workforce system is developed and implemented by a partnership of K-12 education, community college, economic development, and human services agencies. A memorandum of agreement spells out the roles of each partner and promotes interagency partnerships at the local and regional levels.

Barrier: Structural resistance to change

Promising Practices: Unwieldy decision-making processes, typically controlled by the traditional degree side, are a common obstacle to change. Miami-Dade Community College and Sinclair Community College demonstrate promising long-term strategies to drive institution-wide change. Other colleges create shadow colleges not subject to unwieldy decision-making processes.

Barrier: Gap between education and workforce development

Promising Practices: Often, a gap between the traditional degree program and the workforce development side prevents transfer of credits from workforce programs to degree programs. While the goal is difficult to achieve, Central Piedmont Community College is implementing promising practices to connect the shadow college to the credit side by involving academic faculty in teaching contract courses and allocating some contract revenues for travel and professional development of academic faculty. The aim is to promote a full continuum of education and economic advancement that brings short-term career benefits and progresses all the way to transfer to four-year institutions.

Barrier: Limited awareness of promising practices to promote advancement of low-income people

Promising Practices: Community college leaders have much to learn from one another, but they often work separately to reinvent the wheel. Shoreline Community College's role in convening a regional consortium of community colleges represents a promising strategy to disseminate promising practices more broadly.

***

The likelihood for successful change is greatest when external stakeholders and internal community college leadership use a range of effective strategies to work toward a common vision. Research demonstrates that breaking the culture of inertia requires:

- Changes in *policy* to provide incentives and resources for community colleges to make advancement for low-income people a central focus;
- Internal *leadership* capacity to drive change within community colleges to develop and implement pathways for advancement to self-sufficiency; and
- The expansion of *partnerships* with business organizations and workforce systems essential for creating pathways combining work and learning that enable low-income people to advance to better jobs, higher pay, and greater responsibility as they develop new skills.

Findings about successful change strategies point to a dynamic interaction among external stakeholders and internal leadership employing a range of levers

to drive change. The change model chart (see below) is a composite of promising change strategies: it depicts how external stakeholders and internal leaders can use policy, leadership, and partnerships as levers to drive institutional change toward advancement of low-income people. The model addresses the following questions:

- *Which external stakeholders need to be engaged?* Five external stakeholders play, or could play, important roles in driving change to better meet the needs of low-income people: organizing and advocacy groups; employers and business organizations; state and local political leadership; community-based organizations; and national associations of community colleges and state governments.

- *Which internal change agents need to be engaged?* Leadership of local community colleges, city community college systems, and state community college systems can all drive change within community colleges.

- *What levers or strategies can external stakeholders and internal change agents use to drive change?* Policy, leadership, and partnerships emerged as key levers that external stakeholders and internal leadership can employ to promote and support institutional change.

Part 4.

Levers for Change: Policy, Partnerships, and Leadership

External stakeholders and internal change agents can—and do—use policy, partnerships, and community college leadership to drive institutional change in community colleges. *Policy* provides incentives that push community colleges to focus on advancement for low-income people—and the resources to do so. *Partnerships* provide the connections to employers necessary to create pathways to advancement that combine work and learning and link career advancement to skill development, and they provide connections to community-based organizations that can enhance access and retention for hard-to-serve low-income people. *Internal leadership* drives the change within community colleges necessary to promote advancement to self-sufficiency at every skill level on a large scale. All are necessary; none are sufficient.

Analysis of readiness factors for change (see appendix) is a tool that can be used to identify which of the three levers provides the highest leverage in a particular initiative, and which external stakeholders and internal leaders need to be engaged.

Policy

Policy—including funding—plays a significant role in shaping the services community colleges provide, the populations they serve, and the outcomes they achieve. Community colleges operate in a competitive market; by creating market demand, policy creates the incentives that shape the behavior of community colleges.

But which policies are important drivers of community college behavior, and why are they important? Who can change them? And which external stakeholders and internal leaders have the motivation and capacity to drive change in a particular policy?

This section addresses those questions, based upon research findings regarding how policy shapes the current behavior of community colleges and how policy can be a lever for promoting advancement to self-sufficiency. The section also provides examples from the field and discusses the potential implications of particular policy changes.

A broad range of policies, implemented by different agencies and with multiple funding streams, shapes the motivation and capacity of community colleges to create systems for advancement. State policies concerning community college mission, community college funding, welfare, economic and workforce development, and financial aid all have an impact on the ability of community colleges to provide access, retention, and advancement for low-income people on a large scale. In most cases, each set of policies targets specific services for specific populations at different income and skill levels. A central issue is how easy, or difficult, it is for community colleges to transform these fragmented

programs and funding streams into coherent pathways for advancement and a high degree of integration among public agencies.

Along with state policy, local policy and practice also play an important role. Most state policies provide local flexibility and decentralized implementation. Promising policies make it possible—but do not require or guarantee—that the potential for local power will actually drive community college behavior at the local level. In California, for example, the state provides funding for education, training, and support services for welfare recipients and people transitioning from welfare, yet many counties still follow a strict work-first policy that limits the availability of education and training. Washington State promotes career ladder progression as an overarching principle of its welfare system, and it provides funds for development of career ladder systems. While Shoreline and some other community colleges have the internal leadership and regional partnerships to design and implement career ladder systems, many community colleges do not.

Four state policies have significant impact on community colleges:

- State community college mission and funding;
- State welfare policy;
- State economic development and workforce policy; and
- State financial aid.

For each of these policy areas, key issues include the level of funding, the extent to which they promote and support advancement for low-income people, the extent to which they provide funding for innovation and capacity building, and the extent to which they provide a clear, funded role for community colleges. In addition to specific policies, the extent to which state policies create a comprehensive, integrated system for economic and workforce development that supports advancement for low-income people at all skill levels is important.

State community college mission and funding:

Perhaps more than any other policy, core funding for community colleges, which reflects their mission, shapes the services community colleges provide and for whom. It is by far the largest source of funding for community colleges, and the only funding not directly tied to specific programs. Core funding is typically based on enrollment, not performance outcomes. The key issues are who gets counted as an FTE in computing enrollment, and the reimbursement level at which the schools are funded.

Few states align core funding with economic and workforce development or advancement for low-income people; only full-time students in degree programs are counted as FTEs. While support for the transfer function is important,

advancement for low-income people requires support of workforce development programs as well and integration between the two. In some states, however, the mission and core funding are more closely aligned with the changing role of community colleges. In North Carolina, where economic development is the core community college mission, students in certificate and workforce programs are counted as FTEs, although at a lower rate of reimbursement. Oregon counts all students as FTEs, based on the amount of time they attend the college.

While core funding is perhaps the single most important policy, it is a highly technical issue of limited interest beyond community colleges and policymakers. Even though core funding shapes the ability of community colleges to meet the needs of low-income people, advocacy organizations are unlikely to create bumper stickers that say "FTE Parity Now." Community college leadership at all levels is the primary stakeholder for change in mission and core funding policy and has potential to advocate for change in this essential policy. The likelihood for driving change in core funding is greatest when public officials want to change policy in order to make community colleges a more effective vehicle for meeting an economic development agenda. If there is a public will to change policy, there is potential for community college leaders and policymakers to resolve technical policy issues.

State welfare policy:

While it affects a significantly smaller amount of funding, state welfare policy is the gatekeeper for education and training for hard-to-serve low-income people with low skills. It is also the primary source of funding to meet their needs. Simply put, funding and eligibility provisions of state welfare policy determine whether many low-income people who are unprepared for postsecondary education can even gain entrance to a pathway that provides career ladder advancement for youth and adults with higher skill levels.

States vary widely in the level of TANF funds they allocate for education and training, and in the eligibility rules for counting education and workforce development toward the work requirement. Some states have a strict work-first policy that allows few welfare recipients to participate in education and workforce development. Welfare policy in many states is designed to reduce welfare rolls, not to reduce poverty or help low-income people make the transition from welfare to low-wage working poverty.

However, some states, notably California, Washington, and Oregon, make career ladder advancement and wage progression an overarching principle of welfare policy, and they provide funding for program design and innovation. CalWORKS includes a major formal role for community colleges, with funding for program design and implementation to meet the needs of low-income people.

Advocacy and community-based organizations that serve low-income people are the only external stakeholders who have an institutional interest in changing welfare policy in order to promote advancement to self-sufficiency. They rarely

see community colleges as a key institution for helping low-income people advance out of poverty; as a result, they rarely focus on changes in welfare policy that can increase the capacity of community colleges to better meet the needs of low-income people. *(See Part 5 for greater detail.)*

State economic development and workforce policy:

Economic development and workforce policy creates public and private market demand for education and workforce development services. In addition to the level of funding for such policies, two issues are central: 1) the extent to which resources can be used to meet the needs of low-income, low-skill youth and adults; and 2) the extent to which there is a formal, funded role for community colleges as a central institution in implementing state and regional economic development strategies.

In most cases, economic development resources target education and training at higher skill levels. While this does not benefit low-income people directly, it can create career ladder advancement at higher skill levels, with the potential to help low-income people advance to self-sufficiency if other programs enable them to develop the skills and credentials necessary to gain access to higher level pathways. Both North Carolina and Michigan provide significant resources for community colleges to promote economic and workforce development. Economic development is the central mission of community colleges in North Carolina. In Michigan, community colleges play a central role in implementing the state's economic development strategy.

Economic development is the primary institutional interest of employers, business organizations, civic policy organizations, and public officials. Business and civic policy organizations, like MassINC in Massachusetts, demonstrate significant ability to influence and change economic and workforce development policy. Public officials listen to these external stakeholders. An important issue is the extent to which skill development and advancement for low-income people with low skills is a component of the economic development agenda. Where that is not the case, the challenge for organizing and advocacy groups is how to leverage the political influence of business and civic leaders by getting their support for advancement as a strategy to achieve economic development goals.

State financial aid:

For community colleges, financial aid is an important issue because it affects enrollment. Even more important, for most low-income students, financial aid is the gatekeeper for access and retention. In many cases, the design of financial aid programs limits access for low-income people attending community college, many of whom are part-time students or participating in non-credit workforce programs. Research shows other strategies and funding sources that can be used to meet the financial needs of low-income students. CalWORKS, the California welfare system, uses TANF funds to pay for the tuition and books of welfare recipients and people making the transition off welfare. North Carolina makes

economic and workforce development services accessible by charging a flat fee of $35 per course, whether paid by employers or individuals.

Despite its significant impact on access to postsecondary education for low-income people, research did not identify external stakeholders who are working to change financial aid policies.

Promising policies:

Research findings demonstrate promising policies to promote and support advancement for low-income people. These policies were found, however, in only a few states. In addition, only a few promising policies were found in a given state. State and local policy is an area in which significant change is needed; correspondingly, there is a significant opportunity for improvement. Examples of states with promising policies to build upon and disseminate include:

- Making advancement to self-sufficiency for low-income people an overarching community college mission (Washington and California);
- Aligning funding with the economic and workforce development role of community colleges and advancement for low-income people (North Carolina);
- Using performance measures to drive outcomes focused on advancement (Washington, California, and Oregon);
- Providing resources for innovation and capacity-building to support development of pathways for advancement (Washington and California);
- Creating and funding an explicit role for community colleges in welfare-to-work, economic development, and workforce development (North Carolina, Michigan, California, and Washington);
- Providing funding for developing and expanding local partnerships (North Carolina, Michigan, and California); and
- Integrating postsecondary, K-12 education, human services, welfare, workforce development, and economic development policies and agencies into a coherent education and workforce system (Washington and California).

The challenge is not how to craft policies that will drive institutional change to provide advancement for low-income people, but how to create the will and capacity to do so. The problem is primarily political rather than technical.

Jobs for the Future found two ways to use policy as a lever to drive change:

- Advocacy and organizing to change policy; and

- Technical assistance and dissemination of promising practices to help states that want to develop better policy to do so.

Partnerships

Research clearly shows that systems for advancement to self-sufficiency can only be created through partnerships between community colleges and employers. The Shoreline Community College career-ladder system demonstrates that advancement depends upon a strong link between skill development (the supply side) and career advancement (the demand side). Pathways to advancement require concerted action by both partners. Lack of structured connections between the supply side and the demand side is a significant barrier to realizing the potential of community colleges to promote advancement. Findings also indicate that the effectiveness of such systems can be enhanced through partnerships with community-based organizations and local and state economic development, workforce development, and human services agencies. Because they connect with all these entities, as well as K-12 education and four-year colleges and universities, community colleges have the potential to be at the center of these partnerships.

We found effective partnerships that were initiated by community colleges, by employers or business organizations, and by community-based organizations. Regardless of how they are initiated, successful partnerships require the active participation of all entities. Effective partnerships do not just happen, however; they require considerable care and feeding. Building, strengthening, and expanding structured partnerships is therefore an important task for internal community college leadership. Employers can play an important role by defining labor market demands, setting training standards, and shaping training models. Workforce development agencies can act as a system gateway and allocate funding and other resources. Community-based organizations and human service agencies can provide outreach, serve as feeders, and provide social supports. The effectiveness of connections among the partners is as important as the effectiveness of each partner.

Partnerships with employers, community-based organizations, and state agencies strengthen the capacity of community colleges to develop pathways for advancement. Connections to employers and business organizations are of particular importance to expand economic opportunities by combining work and learning. Business can help the partnership:

- Identify regional skill needs and high-demand occupations that provide above-average wages and benefits, with opportunities for advancement;
- Link education and training to regional skill needs in existing career areas;
- Collaborate in developing curricula to ensure that youth and adults develop knowledge and skills employers need;

- Collaboratively develop competency-based portable credentials that are recognized and valued by employers;
- Create career ladder systems that linked to academic and skill advancement;
- Create market demand for customized, contract training; and
- Provide public and political support for community colleges.

Research indicated a number of promising partnerships that demonstrate the vast potential of partnerships to drive institutional change, even if each currently stops short of fully developed pathways for advancement to self-sufficiency at every skill level:

- Large-scale customized contract training for employers at Central Piedmont and Macomb Community Colleges;
- Shoreline Community College's career ladder system;
- Remediation and developmental education linked to occupational pathways at Salt Lake City Community College;
- Project Quest, a partnership between a community organizing group and a community college in San Antonio;
- Partnerships between Portland Community College and community-based organizations and public workforce and human service agencies; and
- Efforts in California to support development of regional partnerships in a more systematic way.

Two efforts by business organizations to build partnerships and drive institutional change in community colleges to better promote advancement for low-income people are at an early stage but hold promise. Memphis 2005, a partnership between the Memphis Chamber of Commerce and the city government, is building sectoral clusters that engage employers, community colleges, K-12 public education, city agencies, and community-based organizations in meeting the skill needs necessary to achieve a comprehensive regional economic development plan. Initial efforts have already resulted in some significant change in Memphis community colleges. The Seattle Jobs Initiative is beginning work with Seattle Community Colleges to develop an information-technology pathway to promote advancement for people who enter with low skills.

Internal Community College Leadership

Internal community college leadership is indispensable for driving institutional change. Wherever we found promising practices that promote advancement for

low-income people, we found effective leadership committed to serving low-income people. While external stakeholders, policy, and partnerships played a major role in creating conditions necessary for institutional change, their impact would be limited without strong leadership to drive change within the community college. This section focuses not on leadership in general but on leadership to create systems that enable low-income people to advance to self-sufficiency.

While not a substitute for leadership within a college, we found that leadership of state and city community college systems has significant potential to promote and support internal change that achieves greater scale. The likelihood for successful change at a large scale is greatest when leadership at all three levels is working toward a common vision: within an individual college, across a city system, and throughout the state system. The Chicago and California community college systems demonstrate that strengthening the capacity of state or city system leadership can be a high-leverage investment strategy.

Within the community college:

Pathways for advancement to self-sufficiency require a broad range of quality practices as well as visible bridges that help students navigate their way toward self-sufficiency. The goal is movement toward one comprehensive college that provides a full range of education and economic progression at all skill levels. Effective leadership of institutional change to promote advancement involves the development and implementation of the practices and bridges that make up pathways, including:

- Advancement to self-sufficiency at every skill level is a core mission and benchmark for performance.
- Structured outreach, support services, and convenient scheduling and location strengthen access and retention.
- Remediation programs linked to occupational and academic pathways provide an effective bridge to postsecondary education for people who enter with low skills.
- Innovative teaching practices enable nontraditional students to succeed.
- Partnerships with business organizations link curricula to regional skill needs and standards, provide portable credentials valued in the labor market, and create career ladder connections to economic opportunities.
- Compressed, modular credentials, multiple points of entry and reentry that combine work and learning, and transferable credits between degree programs and workforce programs provide a path to advancement for people who have to balance work and families with learning.

- Incubating new practices, expanding and institutionalizing promising practices, and building systems to "connect the dots" drive continuous improvement toward advancement systems.

The challenge for internal leadership is developing structures to incubate, expand, and institutionalize promising practices, including bridges and navigation systems that transform isolated programs into pathways. While external stakeholders, policy, and partnerships can promote and support this agenda, only internal leadership within community colleges can make it a reality. Strong support for institutional change from the college president is essential, yet in many cases entrepreneurial "champions" can take the lead in driving the change process.

In many cases, innovation and change are incubated and expanded on the workforce or shadow college side of the college, typically with public and private funding directly linked to programs and without core funding support. While change on the traditional credit side is extremely important, there is significant resistance there and success has been limited. In some cases, expansion of the shadow college to significant scale can begin driving institutional change on the credit side as full-time faculty begin to teach in workforce programs.

Moreover, research found limited awareness among internal leaders about promising practices, whether for programs and systems that promote advancement for low-income people or for institutional change strategies. Identification and dissemination of promising practices offer leverage for promoting institutional change on a larger scale, particularly where it builds connections and mutual support between long-term leaders and a new generation of leaders who are less well known. National associations of community colleges already play an important role, but there is room for expanding and strengthening dissemination of promising practice and convening innovative leaders.

City community college systems:

The Chicago City Colleges Sectoral Workforce Initiative demonstrates the potential for leadership of city college systems to promote change that can increase the scale of promising strategies for advancement of low-income people. Analysis of readiness factors (see appendix) can be used to identify city systems that are poised for change and where a strategic investment can provide high leverage. Where the mayor, business community, and system leadership are aligned behind a common vision for change, investment to strengthen leadership capacity within a city system has significant potential to drive institutional change in an urban setting and achieve larger scale impact.

State community college systems:

Leadership of the California Community Colleges demonstrates the potential for state systems to drive advancement for low-income people on a large scale. State

leaders are working to build a systems approach, moving from pockets of best practice to improved system performance.

California's state leadership plays two important roles:

- Advocating for economic development, workforce development, and welfare policies that enable community colleges to promote advancement; and
- Building and strengthening community college capacity to implement pathways for advancement.

Faced with the prospect of losing a significant number of FTEs under new welfare policies, California's state community college leadership was instrumental in the development of a section of the new state welfare policy, called CalWORKS, that makes designated funds for education, training, support services, and tuition available to welfare recipients and those making the transition off welfare. State community college leadership has developed a statewide program to build internal capacity to deliver quality education and workforce development for TANF recipients.

As community college systems across the nation face declining state revenues, California Community Colleges negotiated the Partnership for Excellence, an innovative strategy that provides additional funding in return for achieving performance goals. The agreement continues support for maintaining and expanding core services, and it also provides investment for infrastructure and program enhancement: community colleges agree to improve student learning and success. The state is investing more than $100 million a year for innovation and program improvement that will increase performance toward system goals.

The leadership of the state community college system is using three strategies to build capacity to improve system performance. First, it is forging a common vision and operating principles to drive the community college role in state workforce and economic development. Second, it is providing funding for innovation and capacity building. Finally, it provides technical assistance and identifying and disseminating best practice.

The Board of Governors has developed a vision and operating principles that make advancement the central strategy for workforce and economic development. These include:

- Making career ladders the overarching principle for economic and workforce development;
- Integrating systems and funding;
- Linking curriculum, programs, and services to employer needs;

- Building collaboration among employers, community colleges, community-based organizations, Workforce Investment Boards, social service agencies, and government to implement career ladder systems;
- Providing a broad range of support services;
- Linking academic and vocational education;
- Building learning communities to improve retention and advancement;
- Building Teaching and Learning Centers to support faculty, staff, and students in moving forward with a career pathways model;
- Providing resources for staff professional development focused on developing skills needed for career pathways approach;
- Linking remedial and developmental education as the first step of career pathways;
- Building connections to regional economic development and workforce systems; and
- Building partnerships with community-based organizations to improve outreach and support services.

To drive progress toward this vision, state community college leadership is funding innovation, the development of long-term career pathways, and the creation or expansion of Teaching and Learning Centers.

While leadership of city and state systems is no substitute for strong campus-level leadership, it clearly can provide direction, strategies, and resources that make it possible to achieve change at larger scale. It can also provide leverage for community-based organizations and employers to approach community colleges and push for change in new ways.

Part 5.
External Stakeholders

Three questions are central to identifying high-leverage strategies for driving institutional change in community colleges:

- Who are the key external players to be engaged?
- What motivation and institutional self-interest can engage these external players?
- What capacity do they have to drive institutional change and what levers or change strategies can them employ?

In contrast to K-12 education reform (for which external players also create pressure for improvement), the successful engagement of external stakeholders in driving change in community colleges creates incentives for community colleges to better meet the needs of low-income people. It also builds partnerships that promote advancement and collaborations to implement promising practices. Often, external stakeholders do not intentionally set out to drive change in community colleges but to solve their own problems. For example, employers create demand for customized training to meet their own need for a better qualified workforce, not to change community colleges.

In other words, change in community colleges is a means not an end. A major barrier to driving change is that many external stakeholders do not see changing community colleges as a means to their end, whether it be economic development or reducing poverty. Engaging external players (particularly the organizing and advocacy community) by promoting awareness about the potential role of community colleges in promoting economic development and advancement to self-sufficiency offers leverage for driving change. The likelihood of successful change is greatest when external stakeholders and internal community college leadership collaborate toward a common purpose.

Research identified five external players who have potential to play important roles in driving change to promote advancement for low-income people:

- Organizing and advocacy groups;
- Employers and business organizations;
- Political leadership and policymakers;
- Community-based organizations; and
- National associations of community colleges and state governments.

This section describes each of these groups, detailing why it matters. We also profile promising practices and summarize their potential as change agents.

Organizing and Advocacy Groups

Advocacy groups and community-based organizations are the only external stakeholders that have an institutional self-interest in advancement for low-income people. There are business organizations and political leaders who promote advancement for low-income people, and those who represent high-leverage opportunities to drive change, but these are exceptions. The presence of advocacy groups at the table in policy development and the design of new community college practices increases the likelihood that change will provide advancement for low-income people.

Several factors frame our findings about the role of advocacy groups in driving change in community colleges:

- Organizing and advocacy groups may not have the political power and influence to drive institutional change by themselves.
- Advocacy groups can increase their ability to drive change by framing issues in ways that can leverage the influence and power of political, business, and community college leaders.
- Economic development is a high priority of political and business leaders. Framing issues in ways that link advancement for low-income people with economic development can increase leverage for change.
- Advocacy groups can play an important role in framing public debate around self-sufficiency as a goal—a standard that can be met only by promoting advancement for low-income people and the higher-level skill development necessary for economic development.

Research indicated a few examples that show the potential for organizing and advocacy groups to drive change in community colleges. This potential is largely untapped, however, because community colleges are rarely on the radar screen of advocacy groups as a way to advance the needs of low-income people. Increasing the awareness among advocacy groups of the role that community colleges can play to promote advancement from poverty to self-sufficiency is a high-leverage investment strategy that can advance the field.

Advocacy groups are using several promising strategies to drive change in community colleges. They are:

- Highlighting the impact of skill shortages and inadequate education and workforce capacity as an obstacle to both economic development and reducing poverty;

- Framing the public debate around the level of income and benefits families actually need to meet their basic needs, and advocating for policies that promote advancement; and

- Establishing self-sufficiency as the measure of success for education and workforce programs, and working with internal leadership to develop practices that promote advancement to self-sufficiency.

The examples we found are a small indication of the untapped potential for organizing and advocacy groups to create change in community colleges. Cabrillo Community College in California, with funding from the Packard Foundation, is building a broad-based consortium to create a county-wide system to move low-wage workers and former welfare recipients up a career ladder. The consortium was successful in changing county policy to extend education and training for hard-to-serve recipients with multiple barriers to employment (Carrasco interview).

In Massachusetts, the Women's Educational and Industrial Union is using a Self-Sufficiency Standard to improve performance of the workforce system. Like most states, Massachusetts' workforce development and welfare-to-work programs have low goals and expectations that result in low performance. The income required for self-sufficiency is $31,992, approximately twice the Workforce Investment Act goal of $16,648 and more than double welfare-to-work goal of $14,560. Self-sufficiency provides a realistic goal that can only be met through pathways for advancement to family-supporting wages and benefits. The WEIU is beginning work with Regional Employment Boards to use workforce resources in ways that promote advancement to self-sufficiency (Lassen interview). Quinsigamond Community College, which has been involved in the Massachusetts Family Economic Self-Sufficiency project—MassFESS—is using the standard of self-sufficiency to create new career ladder pathways. Vice President of Academic Affairs Cathy Livingston is using the standard as a guide for labor market research to design new career advancement pathways that lead to self-sufficiency (Livingston interview).

MassINC, a public policy organization, has issued a series of reports documenting the impact of a labor market skills shortage and a gap in education and training as barriers to both economic development and efforts to improve family income. MassINC found that one in every three Massachusetts workers, or 1.1 million adults, lacks skills for jobs in the new economy: 25 percent have no education credential, 17 percent have language challenges, and 58 percent have literacy challenges. Education and workforce programs are only able to meet a fraction of this need (MassINC et al. 2000). The public debate generated by these reports influenced Jane Swift, upon her becoming governor in 2001, to make a comprehensive adult education and workforce plan her first priority in office.

Employers and Business Organizations

Research findings indicate that business organizations have significant potential to promote systems of advancement for low-income people:

- *Business organizations can play a critical role in the development of pathways to advancement that combine work and learning.* Employers and business organizations help identify high-demand areas of quality employment, help ensure that curricula are linked to regional skill needs and standards, collaborate in the development of credentials that have value in the labor market, and provide career ladder connections to employment. The Shoreline career ladder system demonstrates the impact potential of a partnership designed to both promote advancement and meet employer skill needs.

- *Employers and business organizations can create market demand for education and workforce development through customized training, tuition reimbursement, and public support for economic development resources.* Central Piedmont Community College and Macomb Community College demonstrate the impact business organizations can have in creating market demand by aggregating the workforce needs of small and medium-sized businesses. Moreover, for both Central Piedmont and Macomb business provides valuable public support for community college funding.

- *Large corporations can create industry-recognized, competency-based programs and credentials.* Cisco and Intel develop curricula and credentials, train teachers, provide support, and certify community college as approved sites. Programs and credentials include high-performance skills and academic competencies as well as technical skills, and they offer a broad range of modular credentials that begin with high school level skills.

Research findings further suggest that the most significant impact of business organizations comes through sectoral partnerships at the local level.

Two obstacles stand in the way of realizing the potential to drive change that promotes advancement for low-income people.

First, economic development and meeting the need for qualified workers is the primary institutional interest of business. Often, business focuses on education and skill development for incumbent workers in high-skill positions; advancement for low-income people with low skills is rarely an important part of its agenda. We found business organizations that take a long-term view and support skill development and advancement for people with low skills. Business participation in the Shoreline Community College career ladder system and the Memphis 2005 initiative to achieve regional economic growth by creating sectoral pathways to advancement at every skill level demonstrate the impact that business can have on advancement for low-income people. Higher-end career advancement practices, such as customized training at Macomb Community College, can benefit low-income people, but only if there are also

programs that enable low-income people to gain the skills and work status necessary to gain access.

Second, many business organizations do not see change in community colleges as a major strategy for achieving their economic development goals, particularly with regard to education and training for people with low skills. This is beginning to change. Memphis 2005 and efforts of the Seattle Jobs Initiative to develop an information-technology career advancement system with Seattle community colleges are examples of business organizations that see community colleges as a central institution to achieve their goals.[3]

Political Leadership

State and local political leaders play a critical role in driving—or hindering—change in community colleges by setting policy and funding. *(See Part 4 for detail on policy.)*

This section asks three questions:

- What do state and local political leaders care about? What is their institutional self-interest?
- Who do political leaders listen to? What other external players have capacity to influence political leaders?
- What strategies can engage political leaders to play a positive role in promoting and supporting change?

An interviewee who is very knowledgeable about state policy told us that "economic development is the main priority of state political leaders. They don't care about poor people, and workforce development isn't on their radar screen except as a strategy to drive economic growth. The best strategy to achieve policy that drives advancement for low-income people is to talk about education and workforce development as they to economic development." But there are exceptions: some political leaders support advancement for low-income people either out of enlightened self-interest or social values, as is the case in California, North Carolina, and Washington. In these states, political leaders see career ladder advancement, with entry for low-income people with low skills, as central to economic development, workforce development, and welfare policies. An economic development imperative drives career advancement and wage progression for low-income people.

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[3] The Seattle Jobs Initiative is one of six sites in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Jobs Initiative, a multi-year effort to help 18- to 35-year-old residents of targeted inner-city neighborhoods enter the labor market and advance to jobs that pay family-supporting wages.

We found two strategies for engaging political leaders as drivers of change. The first is to identify leaders who are committed to advancement for low-income people but need help developing effective policies to achieve that goal. The second is to influence political leaders to move in a new direction through organizing or advocacy.

Our findings suggest that framing the need for change in terms of its impact on economic development, then enlisting business and civic leaders as allies, offers the greatest likelihood of success. In states where economic development and workforce policy are focused on education and career advancement, addressing state and regional skill shortages plays an important role in driving change.

Community-Based Organizations

Partnerships with community-based organizations can play an important role in improving access and retention for low-income people, particularly those who are hardest to serve. Strong connections to communities create a strong capacity for CBOs to provide outreach, support services, and education and training for people with very low skills and multiple barriers to employment. However, we found, this potential is largely unrealized because connections between community colleges and CBOs are weak or nonexistent.

The obstacle to "connecting the dots" is that CBOs and community colleges often compete for the same funding; creating a mutually beneficial division of labor is often difficult. We found a belief that partnerships would be valuable, but simultaneously finding that efforts to build such partnerships have had little success. The Center for Community Change and MDC are working to build partnerships between community colleges and CBOs in several communities. These initiatives may develop promising practices for building partnerships that build on the strengths of community colleges and CBOs to create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. On balance, however, our findings about the obstacles to creating effective partnerships suggest that this may not be among the highest-leverage strategies at this time for investing to drive institutional change.

National Associations

National associations of community colleges—the American Association of Community Colleges and the League for Innovation in Community Colleges—can provide leverage for driving change in internal community college practices by:

- Identifying and disseminating promising practices;
- Convening innovative campus, city, and state community college leaders;
- Building connections across community colleges;

- Helping community colleges build on and expand promising practices;
- Identifying and disseminating promising change strategies; and
- Advocating for changes in federal policy that affects community colleges.

National associations of state governments—the Education Commission of the States, the National Governors Association, and the National Conference of State Legislators—can provide leverage for driving change in state policy. They have the capacity to identify and convene innovative governors and legislative leaders, identify promising policies, identify states that are poised for change and would be high-leverage sites for change initiatives, and build on and disseminate promising state policies that are developed.

Partnerships between national community college associations and state governments can provide leverage for state and local initiatives by bringing community college leaders and policymakers together to develop policies that meet the objectives of both stakeholders.

Recommendations:
High-Leverage Investment Strategies to Drive Change

We have argued throughout this document that promoting and effecting changes in community colleges to benefit low-income learners requires a sophisticated approach. There is inertia to be overcome—and that requires creative strategies for changing policy, informing and motivating leadership, and building partnerships that can alter existing patterns of stakeholder interests and relationships.

Below, we recommend three different investment strategies that federal and state governments and private philanthropic interests might pursue to strengthen the role of the nation's community colleges in creating and deepening pathways to advancement for low-income individuals:

- A comprehensive state/local innovation initiative;
- Education and support for the advocacy community; and
- The incubation of new and expanded community college models for advancement.

Although distinct and different, each approach builds upon the findings of this report. Each is designed to engage both external stakeholders who can drive toward change and internal leaders who can move multiple-goal colleges in ambitious new directions. And each proposed investment focuses on one or more of the key levers for change—policy, leadership, and partnerships.

Comprehensive State/Local Innovation Initiative

Rationale: One of the single most powerful investments public agencies and funders could make would be to help a number of influential states align state-level policies with institutional practices at the community college level so that the two work together to advance the skill development and career progression of low-income individuals.

There are a few leading edge states, but none has a comprehensive state policy to promote advancement and none has moved this agenda to scale. Even in leading edge states, some community colleges build on state policy to implement promising practices, but many do not; even the most innovative colleges do not have comprehensive systems of advancement. For the field to move forward, more comprehensive state policies, more comprehensive community college practices, and alignment between the two are needed. The goal would be to create a powerful alignment between policies and financial incentives at the state level and services and programs at the community college level, so that both worked together to strengthen the career advancement opportunities for low-income populations.

We recommend a multi-year, multi-site demonstration project that engages state/local teams in strengthening state policies and institutional practices that promote the advancement of low-income populations.

Recommended activities: We recommend a state/local initiative that explicitly brings together state policymakers and the leadership of one or more community colleges in that state that are committed to pursuing a more aggressive agenda around advancement and pathways strategies. We believe that bringing together state and college leadership can help promote effective policies and more solid implementation and programming within interested colleges in support of career and wage progression of low-income populations.

State teams would consist of representatives of the state policymaking machinery—such as representatives of the Governor's office, key executive branch agencies (e.g., higher education, the Workforce Investment Board, Economic Development, Health and Human Services), and key legislative committees—as well as leaders from colleges interested in expanding their efforts targeted to low-income individuals—including the college presidents and the deans of the academic programs, student services, workforce and economic development programs, and financial aid. The preference would be to involve colleges that already have some elements of effective practices in place and/or whose institutions serve large numbers of low-income individuals. State teams might also include several employers, business organizations, and/or community organizations that work closely with the colleges. The goal would be to assemble a high-level, motivated group that could design improved policies and implement promising programming and that could, through its discussions and deliberations, accelerate progress within the state on both policy and practice.

A comprehensive project would identify and connect state-level teams from three to five states around the country, so that they can learn from and with one another and constitute a strong, visible voice for innovations in policy and practice.

Using the comprehensive framework for pathways to advancement, the teams would conduct a gap analysis, examining existing state policies and institutional programs against the framework and determining where these are strong and where they need further development in order to support career advancement and wage progression for low-income populations. Each state/local team would then choose several areas on which to focus its primary efforts over the three-year grant period. Possibilities include:

- **Finance**: Core funding FTE policies, student aid, performance incentives for institutions that excel at helping low-income students enroll and complete some form of postsecondary credential, and integration of funding streams;

- **Program Strategies**: Innovative programs with the duration intensity, modularity, and credentials to serve low-income students;

- **Support Services**: Student recruitment, counseling, child care, and supportive services;

- **Employer Involvement**: Local and regional partnerships, definition of programs around key industry clusters, pay-to-learn policies, employer incentives for degree completion, and career laddering, etc.; and

- **Integrated Education and Workforce Systems**: Involving postsecondary education, K-12 education, workforce and economic development, and human services policymakers and agencies in integrating policies, funding streams, and implementation.

Teams would work together to develop policy, draft and enact legislation, add or change programmatic offerings and support services at the college level, etc. The goal would be to create a powerful alignment between policies and financial incentives at the state level and the services and programs at the community college level, so that both worked together to strengthen the career advancement opportunities for low-income populations.

Outcomes: Outcomes should include an acceleration of in-state and cross-state learning, experimentation with policy and program innovations, and an increase in activity within these states focused on helping low-income individuals succeed in and advance through community colleges to employment that provides self-sufficiency. Outcomes might include: a new financing system that offers community colleges incentives to increase the numbers of low-income populations they serve; FTE policies to support students who go to school on a part-time basis or in workforce programs; increased "modularity" of course offerings and credentials; course schedules that accommodate students who work while they attend community college; expanded partnerships with employer organizations; increased rates of degree completion and transfer to four-year institutions; organized partnerships with community-based organizations to enhance support services for low-income learners; and increases in the number of community colleges that implement practices that promote advancement.

Education and Support for Advocacy Community

Rationale: From the perspective of institutions interested in the well-being of poor individuals and families, organizations that advocate for poor people in policy debates are critically important. They bring a unique perspective to the table; and if they do their work well, they can bring the voices of their constituents into the debate and apply pressure from below that is otherwise missing.

In recent years, advocacy groups have become more engaged on issues of public education. However, most of their effort has focused on the K-12 system. Curiously, the energy and commitment to ensuring that poor people are better

served by the public system rarely extends to the community college system, even though these institutions are publicly funded and are critically important to the ability of poor people to escape poverty over the long run, as we argue throughout this report. Raising the importance of postsecondary education among the priorities of these advocacy groups and strengthening their capacity to advocate effectively at the state and national levels would be an important accomplishment.

In our scan of the field, Jobs for the Future found a few promising initiatives that demonstrate the untapped potential of advocacy groups to drive institutional change in community colleges. These promising change strategies have three things in common:

- Advocacy groups are effectively using the concept of self-sufficiency to frame public debate about the income and benefits families actually need to meet their basic needs and to set high benchmarks for education and workforce systems, including community colleges.

- Education and economic advancement for low-income people are being linked with the economic development need for a better-skilled workforce. Research reports are creating impetus for change by documenting the percentage of families living below self-sufficiency, the impact of a labor market skill shortage on economic growth, and the unmet need for education and training.

- Advocacy groups use traditional advocacy tactics to change policy and rely heavily on collaboration to strengthen the capacity of community college leadership. For example, advocacy groups work with the leadership of community colleges to develop and implement career pathway programs and needed support services.

We also found, however, that few advocacy organizations are aware of the potential impact that change in community colleges can have on education and economic opportunities for low-income people and families. It is important to engage the advocacy community in order to ensure that change benefits low-income people.

Targeted investment could expand the efforts of the advocacy community to promote change in community college policy and practice that can help low-income individuals advance. Lack of engagement by the advocacy community is a missing opportunity for influence and impact.

Recommended Activities: Funders can encourage creative and strong advocacy groups and networks to make community colleges a focus of their efforts in the coming years and improve their capacity to have an impact. We recommend the following activities:

National event for advocacy groups and networks: A two-day national conference could publicize and present the issues to leading advocacy networks and individuals groups. The event would be designed to bring leaders of the advocacy community together with experts on community college roles in workforce development and economic development. It would feature concrete discussions of best practices, strategic leverage points, successful campaigns, appropriate advocacy roles, etc.

Invited participants would reflect diverse perspectives and strategies for advocating for the interests of low-income people, and it would include national, state, and local organizations. They would have in common a track record of effectiveness in driving change in policy and/or practice. The goal would be to build on their capacity to drive change in different ways and at different levels to maximize impact.

Outcomes: This investment would increase the knowledge of activists in the advocacy community about effective community college programs, the policy issues that limit scalability, and the best ways to structure and participate in campaigns to improve community college activity in helping low-income individuals advance. That knowledge would translate into greater engagement of national networks and state and local organizations in campaigns that support and motivate community colleges to innovate to better serve low-income people. This investment would strengthen the grassroots pressure in and across certain communities for innovative efforts to use public funds more effectively for advancement. A second stage of this initiative might fund organizations that have demonstrated interest and capacity to put into practice efforts to drive change in community colleges.

Incubate New and Expanded Community College Models and Partnerships for Advancement

The field of comprehensive community college approaches to helping low-income individuals at every skill level advance along pathways to self-sufficiency and beyond is a new one. Practice is evolving: this is not a field where best practices are well-understood or time-tested. New models are needed that build upon and integrate existing promising practices. In addition, community colleges cannot create pathways to advancement by themselves. Expanded partnerships are needed that have the capacity to develop career paths to advancement combining work and learning. New models are needed here as well.

We recommend a two-pronged strategy: one that focuses on incubation of promising practices within the community colleges, and one that focuses on developing and expanding innovative partnerships. These are highly synergistic foci and could either be combined as one initiative or separately funded as two initiatives. While there is overlap with the state and local initiative, this strategy focuses directly on change at the local or regional level.

New and Expanded Community College Models

Rationale: In our research, Jobs for the Future saw some very innovative efforts. We were struck, though, that many tend to focus either on the entry level of a pathway or the higher advancement stage, are small in scale, and are not supported by core institutional funding. Segments of the pathway are missing, or gaps prevent low-income people from advancing along a comprehensive pathway.

While some colleges have terrific programs that help connect students and incumbent workers with high-paying, high-skill careers, they have not put into place ladders that could enable lower-skilled individuals to qualify for the higher-end programs. In some cases, this relates to state welfare policies that limit welfare recipient's eligibility for education and workforce development. Other colleges have developed some incredibly creative and effective programs for very low-literacy and low-skill individuals, particularly from within the welfare population, but they have not made as much progress as they would like building program elements on top of these efforts that can help less-skilled individuals move up quickly into higher-end, better-paying jobs. In part, this reflects lack of a well-organized business community that can engage in partnerships providing career ladder advancement.

We recommend that public agencies and funders invest in a group of leading colleges with the explicit goal of helping them build upon their exemplary programs to add additional steps along the career pathway progression. If pathways models are to be adopted more broadly—and to provide a serious opportunity for less-skilled individuals not only to get into community college programs but to advance to certificate, academic credentials, and employment opportunities that can lead to self-sufficiency—the successes of current efforts need to be built upon, even among the lead innovators.

Recommended Activities: We believe that support for three to five community colleges that are committed to expanding their pathway efforts, either to provide advancement to higher levels or to build bridges to career ladder progression for people who enter with low skills, would help advance the field. This commitment should start from the college leadership and extend through division and program staff. It should be reflected in program and budget priorities to expand pathways programs to be more comprehensive and more effective in providing advancement mechanisms for low-income individuals of different skill levels.

The focus of this strategy should be to provide incentives and rewards to leadership at the local level, primarily in individual community colleges that are taking the lead in outreach to and programming for low-income individuals. It is an incubation strategy designed to accelerate and focus local efforts. We recommend that the priority be on identifying lead institutions that are already making progress and pushing them to expand their pathways efforts.

The focus should be on strengthening the capacity of internal leadership in three key areas: improving individual promising practices; integrating promising practices into comprehensive pathways; and developing effective change strategies. Investors in this strategy should look particularly for colleges that are making progress toward and are committed to expanding efforts in some of the following promising directions:

- Establishing advancement to self-sufficiency as the core mission and a key benchmark for performance;
- Designing and implementing pathways for advancement to self-sufficiency, with an effective navigation system;
- Strengthening access and retention support services;
- Establishing skill development bridge programs linked to career pathway advancement;
- Building and strengthening sectoral partnerships that provide career advancement combining work and learning;
- Developing compressed certificates and credentials that are portable and modular;
- Aligning curriculum and programs to labor market skill needs and standards for quality career employment;
- Making it possible for students to earn and use credits on both the academic and workforce sides of the institution;
- Developing and leading an effective institutional change strategy.

Outcomes: These investments should allow several creative and committed community colleges to design more comprehensive advancement pathways and to build upon their past success. The result will be "facts on the ground" that: demonstrate how to knit existing programs together more effectively and transparently so they really function as pathways; or create new programs to fill gaps that make advancement difficult.

These grants to individual colleges (or to divisions that are working on creating pathways) will allow innovative schools to design and incubate one or more pathways and to expand the models that they have been developing to be more comprehensive. We believe that it is more important to expand the reach of the pathway than to expand the number of students who are being served in any particular program. That is, the recommended outcomes would demonstrate how different programs—literacy and remediation, pre-employment training, credential programs, partnerships with business organizations in particular sectors, job placement and work-based learning, and necessary supports—can be

combined efficiently and effectively to help low-income individuals advance quickly.

In addition, creative documentation (in more journalistic policy writing than hard social science research form) can help give life to the choices, strategic decisions, and progress of grantees.

Local Partnerships to Develop and Implement Pathways to Advancement

Rationale: Community colleges cannot create pathways to advancement by themselves. Advancement to self-sufficiency requires structured partnerships with the capacity to develop career paths to advancement combining work and learning. Partnerships can be initiated by internal community college leadership, as was the case with the Shoreline career ladder system, or by external interests such as business organizations or community initiatives to promote comprehensive workforce system reform. Engagement in partnerships can be driven by motivation to improve low-income people's advancement opportunities, as is frequently the case, or to promote economic growth by addressing employers' skills gaps. However partnerships are initiated, they require active and effective engagement by community college leadership and external stakeholders in order to be effective and sustained.

In communities where economic development interests have come to see workforce quality as critical to competitiveness, sectoral initiatives are emerging that focus on the role of community colleges in strengthening regional industry clusters. In many cases, these focus on higher skill levels and do not promote advancement for low-income people. Some take a longer-term perspective and see advancement and skill development for low-income people as an important strategy to achieve economic development goals. This initiative would leverage the influence and capacity of such organizations. For example, two organizations with which Jobs for the Future works have recently made institutional change and sectoral partnerships with community colleges a priority: the Seattle Jobs Initiative, which is a comprehensive community initiative to effect systemic labor market reforms, and Memphis 2005, a partnership between the city's Office of Planning and Development and the Chamber of Commerce to organize industry clusters involving the university and the community college system in creating and pushing a long-term economic development plan for the region.

Based on our research, we have argued that strong partnerships are a critical point of leverage for overcoming inertia and being aggressive in promoting community college innovation regarding access, supports, and advancement for low-income individuals. Research findings indicate that providing support for local consortia or collaboratives built around the self-interest of employers, colleges, low-income job-seekers, and other stakeholders can be a catalyst to expanded programming and services.

We recommend that public agencies and other funders support a small number of these consortia and document what makes them more or less successful. Support for innovative

and strong partnerships that can move communities and their local colleges to more effective programming for low-income residents should be encouraged.

Recommended Activities: Support for collaboratives committed to the design and marketing of pathways programs that can help less-skilled individuals advance could be used for the following:

- Convening local stakeholders;
- Designing pathways that meet real economic needs;
- Subsidizing initial rounds of program implementation, if needed, until participation reaches cost-effective level; and
- Documenting the dynamics and effectiveness of different models of managing and organizing collaboratives/partnerships.

Outcomes: This investment would highlight the importance of intermediary organizations in organizing the constituency for change and in mobilizing that constituency for particular, achievable innovations. It would result in expansion of career pathways efforts in a few communities that have a high likelihood of success, given the confluence of self-interests among the collaborative's members. It could also raise the issue of how to finance the establishment and sustaining of local partnerships on the policy agenda for states and for the federal government.

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Appendix
Readiness Factors for Change

The research findings that led to the development of the pathways to advancement and institutional change models also indicate readiness factors that can help identify high-leverage opportunities to achieve high impact for relatively low investment. While not intended to be fully developed analytic tools, these identify a strategy that could be used to develop such a tool. A gap analysis of readiness factors as a project selection tool focuses on two questions:

- To what extent is a critical mass of promising community college practices in place, so that a focused investment could build on existing practices to create pathways that enable low-income people of all skill levels advance to self-sufficiency?

- To what extent is a critical mass of conditions necessary for institutional change in place, so that a focused investment can make the difference between being poised for change to driving institutional change?

Readiness for Developing Pathways to Advancement

Analysis of readiness for developing pathways to advancement focuses on the extent to which there is a critical mass of promising community college practices upon which major components of pathways can be built—through focused interventions in filling in missing pieces or building connections and navigation systems—to move toward pathways for advancement from entry at low skills to self-sufficiency. Looking at the promising practices identified in the pathways for advancement model, some of the indicators include:

- Do promising practices support access, retention, and advancement for low-income people with low skills to advance to entry-level employment and bridges to postsecondary education and workforce development?

- Do promising practices enable low-income people who have attained skills necessary for employment and postsecondary education to advance to self-sufficiency and beyond through pathways that combine work and learning?

- To what extent is there potential to build upon the foundation that exists to transform existing practices or components of pathways into advancement to self-sufficiency for low-income people who enter at all skill levels?

- Is there the internal leadership capacity to identify and carry out the change necessary to make the leap from promising practices to pathways for advancement?

Readiness for Institutional Change

Analysis of readiness for institutional change focuses on the extent to which the necessary forces to drive institutional change—policy, internal leadership, and partnerships—are in place. What are the barriers to change, and what is the potential to make focused interventions that can make the difference between readiness for change and implementation of change? What is the potential of external stakeholders and internal leaders to use the three levers to swing the balance from potential to action?

Indicators of readiness for change include:

- Is there a strong need for economic development?
- Is economic development a high priority for political, business, and civic leaders? If not, is there potential to make it a priority?
- Do political, business, and civic leaders identify a skills shortage and gap in education and workforce development as major obstacles to economic development?
- Do key stakeholders believe that change in community colleges is an important strategy to promote economic development?
- Are there organizing and advocacy groups that can promote policy that makes advancement for low-income people a central part of efforts to drive economic development?
- Is there a well-organized business community, with effective sectoral organizations, that can work for the policies and build the partnerships necessary to make advancement for low-income people a major mission of community colleges?
- To what extent do state and local policies support community college practices to create pathways for advancement? If not, what is the potential to enact policies that would?
- Is there effective local, city, or state community college leadership that can lead an internal change process to better serve low-income people?

VOLUME 2

An Analysis of Change in Two Community Colleges

Driving Change in Community Colleges: An Analysis of Change in Two Community Colleges

Executive Summary

Jobs for the Future prepared two case studies using the *Pathways for Advancement* and *Institutional Change Strategy* models for analyzing the efforts of community college systems in serving the needs of low-income individuals. Each of the models both informs and draws upon findings from Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Portland Community College in Portland, Oregon. Both institutions are working to improve their capacity to help at-risk youth and low-income adults gain the skills, credentials, and connections needed to move beyond poverty to self-sufficiency.

Jobs for the Future selected these two colleges because preliminary research identified them as moving from promising practices toward institutionalization of career pathways. Although the economic and political climates in which they operate differ significantly, the interaction of three elements—policy, partnerships, and leadership—drives changes in both communities. In-depth interviews reveal that these elements are interdependent and that their interplay derives from the following questions:

- Who and what have been the drivers of change?
- How are internal leaders and external stakeholders engaged in moving toward a pathway approach to serving low-income individuals?
- What intervention strategies would move the community college to a fuller implementation of a pathway approach?

Creating these pathways has required new forms of collaboration with a variety of partners, committed leadership at the state and local level and within the community college administration, and innovative responses to changes in local, state, and federal policy. Analyses of readiness factors *(see Volume I appendix)* indicate that both colleges are well-positioned to operate promising practices and programs at scale.

Both community colleges also benefit from supportive state and local policies, with each institution building upon a longstanding state strategy: using community colleges as a central vehicle for meeting regional economic development needs through workforce development.

However, the target populations for pathways programs vary based on key partnerships. Given North Carolina's long history, state initiatives, and ongoing leadership in workforce development, area businesses look to Central Piedmont Community College to provide both basic skills and customized training for

entry-level and incumbent workers. Strategic partnerships with these businesses improve access to state-of-the-art equipment, allow learners to upgrade skills on-site, and provide stronger connections with national industry skill standards.

While Central Piedmont has focused on low-skilled, low-wage workers, Portland's priority has been displaced workers and welfare recipients. Oregon's workforce development strategies are decentralized, increasing local control but requiring ongoing search for outside funding. City of Portland elected officials, county commissioners, and Portland Community College administrators see that college's mandated focus on professional/technical training as a way to enhance workforce development and alleviate poverty. This broad mission propels Portland Community College into new areas of training and development, such as services to dislocated workers and the creation of advanced technology centers.

Both colleges have quickly increased their capacity to meet employer and community demands for workforce development programs and basic skills. In Charlotte, Central Piedmont Community College has kept pace with the city's need for a cluster approach to customized workforce training: industry-wide training for entry-level workers and skill upgrades for incumbent workers are connected to a highly organized business committee convened by the local Chamber of Commerce. In Portland, the city has not adopted a sectoral strategy, yet through its customized workforce training, Portland Community College has created programs in specific industries for a number of small and medium-sized businesses. Absent a strong employer organization, the college itself acts as a convener businesses and creates consortiums. Employers actively engaged on advisory boards provide much-needed industry expertise.

Leadership at both community colleges recognizes the need for further change and continuous improvement in how the schools advance low-income individuals through the college system to achieve self-sufficiency. Each college is working on specific parts of the pathway, but neither has fully institutionalized the model. With industry partners, Central Piedmont is working to erase divisions in the college, using funds from contract training for staff development, inviting academic faculty to teach in the corporate college, and using a pyramid approach to skill development that bundles curriculum into industry-recognized certificates and individuals progress from basic to advanced skills. Portland Community College experiments with new programs and pieces of the pathway as part of its Open Campus, which functions as the "R & D arm" for workforce development programs. Several nationally recognized programs have succeeded at leveraging nontraditional students—displaced workers, former welfare recipients, recent immigrants, high school drop-outs—into the credit side of the college. However, with a navigation tool, it is confusing to access the array of offerings in occupational areas.

Driven by policy incentives, strategic partnerships, and political will in both communities, each institution is actively involved in and committed to the process of change. With investment in key areas, each college could become a

model of advancement for a broader range of low-income individuals. Although Central Piedmont has articulated a vision for advancement and built exemplary business partnerships, the college lacks the support services needed to ensure that learners of all skill levels can access programs and advance along a path to self-sufficiency. Those services could be provided and strengthened through strategic partnerships with area high schools and community-based organizations, as well as enhanced staffing. At Portland, leadership for an integrated and comprehensive approach has come from campus deans and program staff. Faculty committees have introduced and adopted the pathway approach as a promising future direction. Open access to the college has been made possible through agreements with area high schools and coordination with community-based organizations. While support services have been highly developed for a number of programs, further development of a pathway approach is needed to help low-income individuals move through certificate and degree programs to completion and high-wage employment.

The following table illustrates the steps Central Piedmont Community College and Portland Community College have taken toward implementing a college-wide pathway approach and provides a framework for the analysis that follows.

PATHWAYS TO ADVANCEMENT		
PROMISING PRACTICE	CENTRAL PIEDMONT	PORTLAND
Active Outreach	Employers, Urban League, Job Links, and adult literacy	One-stops and programs run with CBOs and state agencies
Support Services	Basic services in place	Additional in specific programs, coordinated with state agencies
Financial Aid	HOPE and foundation funds	Specific programs supplement: education vouchers available
Bridge Programs	Pilots conceptualized	Pilots implemented
Program Eligibility	TANF allows postsecondary education and training	Integration of human capital and labor attachment model
Connections to Employers	State workforce development initiatives and local employer organizations	Customized workforce development programs and advisory committees
Multiple Points of Entry and Re-entry	Entry-level and incumbent worker programs	Workforce development, TANF, and displaced worker programs
Pathway Design and Implementation	President's vision; working to institutionalize	Conceptualized by staff and deans; connecting pieces in several areas
Modular Credentials	Faculty grants to redesign curriculum	Experimentation in specific programs
Portable Credentials	Envisioned but not implemented	Discussions ongoing; available in select programs
Linked to Employer Skill Needs	Strong links through employer partnerships	Links in specific industries; working on sectoral approach
Competency-based	Piloting career transcript model	Pilot programs in place; connection to K-12 reform
Combined Work and Learning	In workforce development side of the college	In workforce development and select degree programs

Central Piedmont Community College

Policy: A Focus on Workforce Development[4]

The creation of the North Carolina Community College System was driven by political leadership and conceived as the state's workforce development arm. Over 40 years ago, the administration of Governor Luther H. Hodges worked to pass the Community College Act. Since then, the system has been key to the state's economic development. As a result, elected official and business leaders remain focused on the evolution of North Carolina's community colleges. Political leadership continues to provide incentives, funding, and guiding principals that clarify the role of community colleges in economic and workforce development.

At the local level, Charlotte's business leaders have a history of successful collaboration with Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) to meet workforce development goals. Business representatives, community college leaders, and elected officials have sought to integrate the educational resources of the college with the manufacturing and industrial resources of local employers. This ongoing collaboration has proven successful, and the city has reaped the economic benefits of a skilled workforce. Currently, the college serves over 2,700 businesses in Mecklenburg County through its employer-focused job training programs. As a result of this focus, the college's workforce development side has grown considerably, now serving over 60 percent of its entire student body through programs in the Corporate and Continuing Education Center.

A number of state initiatives support CPCC's workforce development programs. As part of an ongoing plan, CPCC has combined state funds that support three separate job training programs into a coherent system of education and training. The oldest of these programs, New and Expanded Industry and Training, was created in 1958 as a means of attracting manufacturers to North Carolina. With state funds, CPCC has been able to offer services to employees of the county's new and existing businesses.

The ongoing partnership between CPCC and Okuma America, a manufacturer of high-tech machine tools, illustrates the program in practice. The state initially provided CPCC with $2 million to run and staff training programs, and Okuma provided the childcare and transportation that made these programs accessible. The relationship did not end there, though. Due to Okuma's rapid growth and CPCC's workforce development mission, the partners worked with the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce to establish a technology institute in 1994 that serves the entire local manufacturing community (Kantor 1994).

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[4] Much of the policy section of this case study was informed by the work of Brian Bosworth on North Carolina's employer-focused job training programs.

State funding for the Focused Industrial Training program—FIT—goes toward retaining small manufacturing companies that need training in technology in order to remain economically viable. Solectron, a contract manufacturer of print circuit boards, received FIT training funds through CPCC to train instructors and create instructional videos to help entry-level employees gain soldering skills. Solectron donated up-to-date equipment so that CPCC could provide relevant training on manufacturing skills. Because few workers were readily available for entry-level positions, Solectron targeted fast-food workers enrolled in ESL courses at CPCC. Through additional state funding, these employees also receive training in basic skills from CPCC faculty.

Basic literacy and skills for incumbent workers are frequently requested by employers and subsidized through the state's Occupational Continuing Education program. CPCC has developed an extensive roster of courses at a number of employer sites. At $35 per course, this program provides affordable training to area employers and provides an inexpensive way to enhance the competitiveness of participating companies. For example, the Charlotte Aviation Department sees literacy programs as an essential first step to advancement for the agency's entry-level employees. Based on employer and employee needs, CPCC added other courses available to the general public at the offices of the Aviation Department. These courses range from business writing to building maintenance.

Leadership: Combining Forces to Create a Coherent Delivery System

CPCC leadership has played a key role in building high-quality, accessible, and affordable workforce development programs. A decade ago, the trustees had a clear vision when they searched for a new CPCC president: they wanted to return to the roots of career education. The trustees chose Dr. P. Anthony Zeiss, who has been president of Central Piedmont Community College since 1992, for his expertise in and commitment to workforce development. Under Dr. Zeiss' leadership and the direction of the pro-business trustees, two themes permeate the college's services: convenience of classes and relevance to careers (CPCC Works 2000).

A focus of leadership has been the active development of partnerships and the building of public support. With his leadership team, Zeiss has worked to integrate economic and workforce development initiatives with human services to create a coherent delivery system of services. Nor have internal leaders acted alone. CPCC operates within a broader system that integrates workforce development across multiple state programs and in partnership with state and local agencies, employers, and community-based organizations. Although employers are primarily concerned with developing a highly skilled workforce, strong leadership at employer organizations like the Chamber of Commerce has been critical to integration. The Chamber also plays a key brokering role for CPCC, connecting the college to new and existing businesses and helping shape workforce development and adult education programs that meet critical needs.

The relationship between the Chamber and CPCC goes beyond recruiting and retaining businesses. Chamber Chairman Carroll Gray recently succeeded in getting a sizable Knight Foundation grant to expand CPCC's adult literacy programs. This action reflects a mutual commitment by the chamber and the school to building a high-quality workforce in the region by responding to the needs of employers and low-skill, low-wage workers.

Working with business organizations, CPCC President Weiss has driven internal change, pushing the college to respond to employer needs. The college's governing board initiated a 16-month planning process in 1993 to ensure that the school was meeting community, student, and business needs in strategic and effective ways. CPCC administrators decided to shift their workforce development model to educating a continuum of learners in order to increase faculty buy-in and begin institutionalizing this approach throughout the college. As a result, courses offered through Continuing and Corporate Education were developed around learner needs and market demands in five areas: emerging, existing, and transitional workers, as well as entrepreneurs and explorers. Working within this new framework, CPCC faculty, staff, and administrators are increasingly concerned with "student needs categories as opposed to college instructional categories" (Kantor 1994).

The cultivation of relationships with key legislators has resulted in increased resources for the college. Although it doesn't reflect the college's largest appropriation, the recent renewal of one state bill shows how Zeiss has combined support from employers and politicians. He brought together a broad state coalition to push for House Bill 275, which allows a percentage of unused unemployment insurance surplus funds to be transferred to North Carolina community colleges for equipment. The bill was supported by North Carolina Citizens for Business and renewed in 2001. This year, CPCC expects to receive $2 million from unemployment insurance to update equipment for workforce development programs. Current legislation, advocated by Zeiss, will provide tuition and fees to students who enroll in high-demand occupations where a dearth of skilled workers exists.

Partnerships: Educational Expertise Meets the Needs of Employers

CPCC's partnership with the Charlotte Chamber has been key to the college's expansion. Economic growth in the region has required commensurate growth in community college services to maintain open access to workforce development programs. The passage of five bond issues since 1995, for a total of $230 million to improve and expand facilities, demonstrates ongoing community and business support of CPCC. Using those funds, CPCC has built four new campuses in the past two years and expanded its Internet and distance learning offerings. CPCC now has five comprehensive campuses and a new Northeast site under construction, illustrating its ability to move quickly and meet ongoing demands for services. This is of critical importance in the context of large increases in enrollment expected nationally (Carnevale and Desrochers 2001).

This public/private partnership was further strengthened in 1998 when business and education leaders and elected officials created a strategic planning document to ensure the region's continued prosperity. Based on an extensive analysis of the local economy, the "Advantage Carolina" plan focuses on six industry clusters that account for recent employment growth and have potential for future expansion. The plan generated fourteen initiatives, many of which focus on the community college as the key provider of workforce development programs. For example, the Workforce Development Continuum involves a K-16 approach to education and training, one that is demand-sensitive and results in "certified skills leading to viable career ladders" (Advantage Carolina 2000).

Business has not been the only driver of expanded and enhanced training offered through the Corporate and Continuing Education Center. In 1995, the Urban Institute at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte worked with CPCC, the Employment Security Commission, the Department of Social Services, and the Charlotte Chamber to conduct a survey about employer satisfaction with the workforce development system. Employers asked for improved services for entry-level workers. In response, CPCC devised a follow-up system to determine the effectiveness of CPCC training programs in helping those employees to advance.

In recent years, the Corporate and Continuing Education Center has responded to the information technology needs of employers as well. The Charlotte Chamber of Commerce formed an Information Technology Council to integrate IT into workforce development programs. Like the Chamber, the council plays a key role in recruiting businesses to Charlotte and coordinating training needs with CPCC. Currently, CPCC offers a number of distance education programs developed to meet the needs of health care professions in Charlotte. In addition, it is making efforts to identify a bridge population and prepare low-skill employees for the IT industry using distance education.

Although CPCC's partnerships with government and community-based agencies are less developed than with employers, they provide important access points for low-income individuals. The initial portal to CPCC is through adult literacy training, a state-supported program that serves over 4,000 students annually in a variety of locations. In the Bright Beginnings program, run jointly with the North Carolina Department of Social Services, parents and their young children come three days per week to learn basic literacy skills. CPCC staff also teach basic skills courses at the two Job Link Centers, the regional one-stops, managed jointly by Goodwill Industries the state Department of Education and Training. The Urban League works closely with CPCC, the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Service, and Charlotte to administer STEP UP, an initiative designed to move individuals with multiple barriers to employment from welfare to work. Established in 1999, the program provides job-readiness, intensive remediation, and life skills training while engaging participants in the job search process.

Of the county's many community-based organizations, the Urban League seems to have the best-developed relationship with CPCC. TANF-eligible adults can connect to CPCC through the Urban League's Computer and Office Systems Training Center, a ten-week certificate taught by CPCC instructors at Urban League sites. Low-income students and adults are recruited into the program by both organizations. Participants receive Continuing Education Units and gain skills in computer operations and applications, keyboarding, business math, workplace literacy, and customer service. In operation for over a decade, the Computer and Office Systems Training Center has matched graduates in companies that both pay well and offer tuition reimbursement for employees. The Urban League serves as a liaison between underserved populations and CPCC through this program.

Through articulation agreements with local schools, CPCC also offers a high school diploma as well as GED testing. Demand for services is growing: over 3,100 students, ranging in age from 16 to 87, are enrolled in Adult High School and GED programs. However, high school alternative and concurrent enrollment programs are not a major pipeline into the college. Although it is working to improve connections between the K-12 system and the college, CPCC lacks strong relationships with area high schools and has not been extensively involved in high school reforms. CPCC continues to cultivate this relationship with the hope of making a positive impact on current reform efforts.

Pieces of the Pathway: Current Offerings and Future Direction

CPCC has many key pieces of a pathway model in place: strong internal leadership, promising state and local policies, involved elected officials, and an organized business community. The leadership team is committed to developing the internal mechanisms to connect degree with workforce development programs. Strengthening partnerships with community-based organizations will help the college extend its reach further into the community.

To serve the needs of low-income learners and workers, the leadership of CPCC believes that the state needs to change its funding formula to accommodate the differential cost of instructional delivery. Although its policies are better than most, North Carolina's community colleges are the lowest funded of three educational systems: community colleges received $3,200 per full time equivalent for noncredit offerings in workforce development programs and $4,000 per FTE for credit courses within degree programs; in contrast, the figures are $6,700 per student in the K-12 system and $9,000 per student in the state university system. Despite consistent growth in adult literacy services over the past decade, the formula has not changed. One FTE represents 512 contact hours for credit courses and 620 contact hours for non-credit courses. As an administrator put it, "The occupational side has to do more with less."

One of the more innovative developments at CPCC has been the creation of Jump Start, modularized, semester-long training programs that result in

certificates tied to industry standards. This series of offerings focuses on low-income individuals and connects them with training for in-demand occupations and technical fields. Classes take place at a variety of times, and generous scholarships are available through the CPCC Foundation, the college's private fundraising arm. Employer partners guarantee successful participants an interview.

While links to the labor market and employers are strong, CPCC has devoted less energy to active outreach and support services. Through a mix of federal and state-funded programs, CPCC, like many community colleges, offers basic support services to low-income learners. In addition to the usual services provided by the Career Center—job fairs, employer panels, career counseling—low-cost career assessment classes and job-placement services are provided by three key partners: the Employment Security Commission, United Parcel Service, and a staffing agency. With funds from Washington, DC-based Wider Opportunities for Women and the Women's Resource Center, low-income learners can also access childcare. However, current services are not coordinated and are not fully meeting the needs of this population.

CPCC also recognizes it needs to improve coordination with case management providers and to provide funding for additional bilingual advisors and counselors. Due to a fragmented service provider landscape, it has been difficult to recruit and inform low-income learners about available programs, eligibility, financial aid, and employer partnerships. Instead of a seamless system, students navigate a confusing array of options while juggling work, school, and family. Recently, CPCC has been more aggressive in pursuing partnerships with community-based organizations focused on the needs of low-income learners.

The potential for linkage exists, as demonstrated by the success of the Pathways to Employment program at CPCC. The model was co-developed by the North Carolina Community College System and the North Carolina Division of Social Services to address work-first requirements for TANF recipients. CPCC's 14-week, intensive program provides basic skills, social, and job specific training in high-need areas: customer service, medical office administrative procedures, medical reimbursement, hospital unit coordination, and office information systems. For eligible students, scholarship funds are available through the United Way. Participating employers guarantee an interview to all graduates; entry-level wages average $10.78 per hour. In its first year of operation, Pathways to Employment had a 77 percent placement rate and a 89 percent retention rate.

Based on successful pilot programs, CPCC has provided ongoing professional development and additional incentives for faculty to redesign curricula and develop effective instructional strategies to reach low-income learners. The leadership at the college is moving toward compressed degrees that enable students to move back and forth from work to learning, with certificates awarded along the way and eventually leading to a credential or degree. CPCC is also working to repackage curriculum programs for shorter duration based on

competencies rather than seat time. To get faculty to buy-in, CPCC is providing release time and mini-grants for further curriculum redesign and development. Key administrators believe that this is the way to sustain changes that serve low-income learners.

Clearly, CPCC benefits from the integration of workforce development into the community college's mission and state policy. The extent to which the college can become a leader in educating low-income individuals depends upon its ability to grow more partnerships, as it has with the Urban League, and further connect promising programs, such as Pathways to Employment and Jump Start certificates, with the college's degree-granting side.

Portland Community College

Policy: The Interplay of State and Local Initiatives

Community colleges play a crucial role in workforce development policy in both the city of Portland and the state of Oregon. The link is organizational and conceptual at the state level through the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development.

For the past two years, the Department Commissioner has met with workforce development directors from community colleges throughout the state to define their role. This group has prepared a position paper that articulates options and strategies, although without specifying actions at individual institutions. It is a call to action, urging community colleges and policymakers to create a comprehensive system of services at the regional, state, and local levels "where systems and partners respond to business concerns, technological advancements, and the needs of all workers" (Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development 2000). While there is broad recognition that workforce development is best achieved through the state's 17 community colleges, implementation varies based on local need. The governance board, a decentralized system that assures flexibility and responsiveness, views workforce development activities as integral to the community college mission. Given the interplay between state and local policy, internal leadership and external change agents at the local level are extremely important in carrying out this mission.

As a result of a state and city-wide focus, workforce development and adult education programs serving low-income individuals at Portland Community College have grown considerably in the past five years, with more than half of the college's 97,000 students now enrolled in noncredit programs. This is the seventeenth consecutive year of enrollment growth at PCC, despite a decline in the number of degree-seeking and transfer students. College administrators estimate that 70 percent of the current student body works, with a significant number earning incomes below the poverty level. The percentage that works—and with incomes below the poverty level—have both risen in the past decade as more at-risk youth, welfare recipients, low-income individuals, and displaced workers access PCC services and advance through the college system.

Two major federal policies have affected services to low-skill, low-income individuals at the state and local level: the Workforce Investment Act and welfare reform, as embodied in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). In Portland, workforce development players have responded to these federal changes in innovative ways, developing effective new strategies and creating new programs.

Elected officials and community college leaders have used WIA guidelines to advance their workforce development goals and poverty reduction agenda.

Members of the city council, county commissioners, and key mayoral staff members realized that a decade of state economic progress had zero impact on poverty statistics in Portland. As a response, Mayor Vera Katz has focused on workforce development as a strategy for alleviating poverty. The workforce development liaison to the mayor's office is on loan to the workforce development board, collaborating on a policy level with PCC programs in Portland's poorest neighborhoods. Moreover, under WIA, the city radically has restructured its major workforce development board. The city and county have pooled all training dollars to create a coherent workforce development system and facilitate ongoing collaboration among community colleges, local and state agencies, high schools, and youth-serving organizations.

Changes in welfare legislation have affected PCC's outreach and support services to low-income individuals. Twelve years ago, then-Governor Barbara Roberts divided Oregon into 15 workforce development districts, with either a private industry council or a community college serving as the prime contractor for Adult and Family Services. In Portland, PCC and Mt. Hood Community College created Steps to Success, a nationally recognized program that allowed welfare recipients access to postsecondary education. Since then, however, Oregon, like other states, has moved from a human-capital-investment model focused on education and support services to a labor-attachment model focused on job placement under the work-first requirement of welfare reform.

The education, training, and eligibility requirements set by TANF have forced PCC to create a hybrid system that combines work and learning. Originally, Steps to Success served former welfare recipients' needs through education. However, that system was difficult to package in a way that people could access and complete. PCC has refocused its program to incorporate the most promising pieces of both the human-capital-investment and labor-attachment models, with short-term training alternating with subsidized employment and internships.

WIA and TANF requirements have also driven the level of support services around retention and wage enhancement. PCC based its decision to run some of the area's one-stops on concern that former welfare recipients would lack the supports they needed to complete education and training programs leading to self-sufficiency. Co-locating services and out-stationing PCC staff at one-stops and community-based organizations has created a pipeline from basic job training and placement to skill upgrades and educational advancement. Off-campus, the success of PCC's community-based programs has created greater awareness about the need for high-quality advising and support.

High school restructuring and reform efforts have contributed to an increase in dual enrollment and in services for high school students and at-risk youth. Because PCC awards more diplomas than any other institution in Oregon and receives significant funding from participating school districts, K-12 reforms have had affected curricula and delivery services, especially the state's Certificates of Initial and Advanced Mastery, which set curriculum standards and call for competency-based assessment in specific career pathways. Reform

efforts were sparked, in part, by House Bill 3565, which represented the public will and political climate in Oregon that high school students need to connect with "something real."

While many promising workforce development policies and visionary education reforms are on the books in Oregon, state funding has not been adequate to carry out reform. Various measures to reduce property taxes—although not directly related to community college policy—have severely limited PCC's ability to capitalize on reform efforts. Since Measure 5 capped property taxes in the mid-1990s, Oregon has underfunded education at all levels.

Because of ongoing funding shortages, PCC has had to be entrepreneurial in seeking other funding streams that align with its goals. Both the city and the college have won federal and private grants, from funding for short-term pilots to funding for multi-year demonstration projects. Three areas account for much of the new revenue and new program development: TANF and displaced worker programs, alternatives to high school, and workforce development initiatives.

Leadership: Developing New Practices and Incubating Innovation

The very structure of PCC indicates the institutional commitment to under-served youth and adults. As Dr. Daniel Moriarty, President since 1987, states, "We are not a social service agency, but we have significant education and training resources to help alleviate social problems." Dr. Moriarty has seen the expansion of PCC into three comprehensive campuses—Cascade, Rock Creek, Sylvania—with one Open Campus that includes four workforce training centers and delivers classes in over 200 locations.

While the comprehensive campuses offer a variety of programs targeting the needs of low-income individuals, the Open Campus was specifically created as an arm into the community, a link to employers, and an incubator of new programs. Because it operates as a separate unit, the Open Campus is not hampered by policies like an often-unwieldy curriculum and a faculty-approval process that might impede growth and limit the college's ability to respond quickly to employer demand. Innovation—much of it funded by customized training, federal grants, and outside foundations—has resulted in stronger workforce development programs and enhanced student services.

While many programs depend upon a number of funding streams, Oregon's funding formula supports both credit and noncredit courses, although not equally: 1 FTE is 510 contact hours for noncredit and 450 for credit offerings. In 1999, the Open Campus accounted for over half the headcount but only a quarter of the college system's FTE. Given the dependence on outside funding sources to make up for a lack of state funding of noncredit programs, the Open Campus has had to serve many masters. As a result, programs often end up as marginalized or fragmented.

Leadership at the executive dean level has been a key factor in adopting and implementing programs that provide access and advancement to low-skill, low-income individuals. Using labor market information from the Oregon Employment Department, as well as data on student enrollment, PCC recently reviewed program offerings at each campus. Among other recommendations, the review committee proposed "setting up educational pathways for students to move through course work and job training in smaller increments than merely enrolling in (and often not completing) a two-year degree" (Program Mix Committee 2000). Based on a drop in full-time enrollment and a sharp rise in interrupted schooling, the committee also recommended selecting major growth occupational clusters as areas for further curriculum development.

Administrators report that faculty are intrigued by the notion of pathways as an organizing principle and interested in realigning curriculum to create multiple entry points. However, there is no clear mandate or incentive system for them to do so. Dr. Nan Poppe, Dean of Adult and Continuing Education, summarizes the barriers to institutionalizing this approach: "We know what works for part-time adults, but we haven't benchmarked these best practices to share information with all faculty."

Specific programs and campuses have been proactive in responding to shifts in incentives and policies. Innovation has been encouraged by the Executive Dean at the Cascade Campus, Dr. Mildred Ollee, who has a strong commitment to serving those parts of the community who have benefited the least from Portland's economic boom. Under her leadership, the campus has started to offer work-site classes in modularized formats. Because developmental education is often the most isolated from industry, administrators and staff have also sought to create a contextual environment for remedial programs. "These programs don't see themselves as part of a continuum," says Dr. Ollee, "and yet 54 percent of Cascade's student population test into developmental education classes."

The low-skill, low-income segment of the student body needs additional literacy and math skills before individuals can move into either occupational or credit-bearing classes, but the traditional delivery mechanism was not effective with working adults. In 1998, PCC recruited a new team of deans to the Cascade and Open Campuses, based on their expertise in moving at-risk youth and adults through career pathways. Under this new leadership, bridges have been built to move students from remedial to career-related courses: student services were reorganized, resources were moved to increase retention and advancement, and both faculty and advising staff received high-quality case management workshops.

Worksystems, Inc., (WSI) Portland's Workforce Investment Board, has also sought to improve PCC's approach to workforce development. Under the current leadership, it looks for receptive places in the community college where it can bring a demand-driven perspective to the table. At PCC, the Open Campus had the flexibility to partner and create new programs. WSI has worked with PCC to knit together a service delivery system and move toward a demand-side

model, adopting outcomes rather than service as an organizing principle. Together with staff at PCC's Adult and Continuing Education division, WSI has broadened its workforce development training team. The team had been created as a strategy by the WSI and the school to deal with segmentation within PCC's training programs. There has been no clear pathway for those learners in non-credit programs wanting to continue their education and training after initial job placement. Workforce development staff have worked on the bridge between credit and noncredit programs at PCC as they have risen through the ranks and attained dean status. Yet access for low-income individuals is still an issue despite their efforts—not in terms of getting in the door but in advancing those learners through the system.

Partnerships: Connecting Broad Areas of Program Practice

To fulfill workforce development goals, PCC has developed key partnerships with individual employers, high schools, community-based organizations, and state agencies. Although the objectives of each varies, the Open and Cascade Campuses have played an intermediary role, convening a variety of stakeholders to establish citywide strategies and approaches.

Portland does not have a strong employer organization partnering with the college, so PCC has taken the lead itself. Similarly, attempts to develop a citywide sectoral strategy or cluster approach to workforce development have not been successful. On a state level, the Oregon Business Council, made up of the state's 40 largest employers, has been more active, while the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Education Compact have focused on brokering job opportunities for youth and supporting K-12 reform efforts.

In part, this lack of organized business leadership is due to shifts in the economic base. As in many places, information technology is quickly replacing manufacturing and industry jobs in Portland. Intel has been the most influential IT player on postsecondary education, both regionally and locally, increasing pressure on the state to fund two-year Associates degrees in microelectronics and four-year engineering programs through use of HIB funds and partnering with PCC to expand its microelectronics offerings. In addition, through its workforce training centers, PCC has forged strong partnerships with a number of Portland's small and medium-sized businesses, which make up the bulk of the city's employers.

Despite the lack of a strong employer organization bringing the voice of employers to the college, PCC's Open Campus has been both entrepreneurial and responsive to employer needs. PCC has been particularly successful at partnering with individual employers to move low-skilled workers into entry-level jobs, but it has been less successful in moving that population up a career ladder. One of the main providers of services, the Open Campus Customized Workforce Training, believes third-party certification of skill sets is the wave of the future, one that can push institutional change based on a national set of skills

standards. Through performance measures and evaluations, PCC determines which Customized Workforce Training programs to replicate at other campuses, an R&D function driven by the needs of individual businesses.

In partnership with WSI, the college has convened partnering employers to create a sectoral training approach and improve relations between entry-level workers and their supervisors. PCC has reacted to business demands by forming industry consortiums, so that customized training programs are broadened and participants gain transferable skills. Ninety percent of these programs' services focus on front-line workers, a typically under-served population. In Portland, recent surveys indicate that 60 percent of this population lacks the necessary literacy skills to move out of entry-level work. While money is on the table, employers show a general lack of investment in lower-level employees. PCC program administrators speak of a disconnect between interest by the CEO or HR director and the front-line supervisor who sees no need for the investment. In working with employers, PCC staff have pushed for new areas of training, especially in cultural awareness and communication for those on-line supervisors. Internship programs are being used to break down barriers of language and culture. Some longstanding PCC/employer relationships have led to greater awareness of career paths on the part of business.

To underscore the importance of retention, Customized Workforce Training has developed a "return on investment" model for incumbent worker training. For example, training created for the semiconductor industry reduced turnover by 50 percent, with 42 percent of new employees coming from the Enterprise Zone, an area that makes up only 12.2 percent of Portland's workforce (Scruggs and Coffin 1998).

PCC has built strong connections with local high schools, both in terms of articulation efforts and involvement in accelerated programs. Offered at various campuses, PCC provides 16 options to 6,000 high school students annually, ranging from vocational programs for special needs students to open enrollment programs for home-schooled youth. On the industry side, the PAVTEC Education Consortium was formed to create partnerships for education, economic, and workforce preparation. One priority for this consortium is a K-12-through-community college emphasis for program development and articulation. According to 1999 data, 37 percent of the students in this articulation program attend PCC, a rate higher than the state average of 25 percent of students attending two-year colleges. The tech-prep articulation program includes professional technical education courses within 22 program areas at PCC. Program directors see these offerings as a way to "plug students into pathways" and offer technical assistance to high schools wanting to create their own career pathway programs that lead to credentialing programs at PCC.

Performing the role of an alternative high school, PCC Prep provides options for drop outs, ages 16-20 years old, so they can obtain a diploma and prepare to enter into credit courses at PCC. The program receives referrals from high schools, social services agencies, the Youth Opportunity Center, and community

based-organizations. Working within the Empowerment Zone, participating schools in Alternative Pathways work to integrate contextualized learning within a traditional GED structure while providing social supports needed for successful transitions into college. By integrating academic learning with career exploration, the program is designed to start students on a pathway that connects with careers. The program was initiated by Portland-area educational, business, and social service leaders who were concerned about the lack of training options for graduates from alternative schools. Few of these graduates enrolled in postsecondary training, and fewer still completed an educational program leading to a high-wage, high-skill jobs.

PCC has a long history of partnering with and building the capacity of community-based organizations serving low-income individuals. For example, PCC agreed to act as the fiscal agent for a new grassroots organization, Southeast Works, that wanted to run a one-stop center but didn't have the track record to manage a large grant. After the first year of successful operation, PCC withdrew, although several PCC staff continue on-site. Both partners benefit from the arrangement: blending of staff creates a cross-fertilization of knowledge between professionals with different orientations and brings new students to PCC through a variety of access points. As funds get tighter, directors of community-based organizations feel that collaborative models are essential, especially because federal grants require greater collaboration to avoid duplication in services. In this climate, PCC has to leverage resources to continue serving low-income individuals. Thus far, turf wars have been avoided because of the established relationships among most of the workforce development players and youth-serving agencies.

A new technology center at one of Portland's high schools demonstrates the creative collaboration among the community college, government agencies, employers, and community-based agencies. It is seen locally as a model for private-public partnership offering short-term training leading to decent-paying jobs. The Tech Center is located at Marshall High School and was built with urban renewal funds resulting in state-of-the-art welding and computer labs. Southeast Works provides screening and performance tests as well as all the supports of a one-stop. Industry-specific subsidized classes on welding are team-taught by an employee of Gundersen, a key employer partner, and a PCC instructor. The goal for the center is to expand its employer base and continue to create industry-wide programs. It also wants to build a bridge to the welding program at another PCC campus, which has a nine-month, tuition-based certificate program and two-year Associates degree. The computer lab will soon be used as a Cisco networking academy, targeting 16-year-old students living in the Empowerment Zone and recruited through the Youth Opportunities Center. Also through the Tech Center, Stream Wireless currently offers a 160-hour, on-site training that crosses industries. At the end of the training, graduates are guaranteed an interview at Stream. In its first year of operation, the program has been successful, almost doubling Stream's retention rate.

Pieces of the Pathway: Current Offerings and Future Direction

To capitalize on innovation achieved through special programs and ongoing partnerships, PCC's three comprehensive campuses need to build bridges from exemplary programs for TANF recipients, at-risk youth, and entry-level workers to traditional credit and certificate bearing programs. Despite inadequate funding and bureaucratic barriers, leaders and administrators are addressing this issue in a variety of ways.

Some of the impetus for change is based on a disconnect between the college's ambitious goals and its current offerings. Many administrators and staff at the Open Campus believe that PCC's open door policy is a fallacy. As Dr. Poppe notes, "Many get in, but thousands get trapped in the vestibule." Most low-income individuals experience a few courses in adult basic or developmental education but never make their way into credit classes. Administrators at this campus have stimulated a groundswell of support for creating a systematic articulation of concrete career pathways as well as a navigation tool that details the multiple entry and exit points for students, based on a person's skill level, career options, family obligations, and financial needs. Internal leadership discussions center on developing a training team whose members could articulate and build those internal career pathways.

The comprehensive campuses have revised curricula in some areas. For example, using foundation funds, the machine manufacturing technology at the Sylvania Campus created a modularized, self-paced curriculum offered in an open lab by on-site staff and tutors. The program serves as an example of how to retool an old curriculum to fit the needs of working adults. However, most new program ideas need to be funded with existing dollars. To encourage innovation, the program mix committee recommended establishing a budget within the general fund to act as an "academic venture capital fund" for responding to industry and community needs. The committee proposed $75,000 renewable for two years, at which time a new program should be self-sustaining.

Successful pilot programs have built on success. While the current structure of many developmental education courses doesn't work for TANF recipients, PCC's College Bound curriculum for out-of-school youth demonstrates how remediation can be packaged in intensive, contextualized modules. PCC's Open Campus is working to adapt that youth development model to fit an adult population. And at the PCC-run one-stop, developmental education programs are given a workplace context. With help from industry partners, PCC staff are redesigning a portion of adult basic education classes to align with needs in the microelectronic industry. The one-stop has also received a grant from Intel to develop a compressed curriculum focused on computer skills for entry-level workers.

One strategy for integrating innovations campus-wide is to connect with other divisions to modify current programs in order to fit the needs of working adults. PCC is looking to combine TANF and dislocated worker funds with outside

grants and general funds to provide more bridge programs for this population. In moving away from the shadow college model, PCC needs to work with mainstream faculty who don't see welfare recipients or low-skilled, low-income individuals as central to their teaching and who aren't aware of the feeder systems into the college.

Most of the innovative work with under-prepared youth and adults is taking place at the margins and built on soft money. Institutionalizing effective strategies is critical for building pathways to self-sufficiency. As funds for specific programs diminish, PCC will need to shift resources. Staff fear they will be forced to move from a training and education model offering skill upgrades to job placement. PCC has experimented with different delivery mechanisms but has not allocated the resources to build a comprehensive system. Many staff feel that this is key for sustainability. PCC is looking to extend its reach into the K-12 system to connect with younger students needing basic skills and apprise them of career and college options. As in the adult programs, PCC has a host of options for high school students earning dual credits but no systematic way of moving those students into and through specific pathways.

PCC has been particularly successful in securing sizable grants from federal agencies and private foundations to fund innovation. These programs have both jump started efforts to implement a pathway approach and allowed for study and evaluation efforts. For example, with National Science Foundation funds, PCC studied low-wage women in degree-granting programs in computer information science. When this research looked at performance, patterns emerged for women of color: they tended to drop out at the programming level. The college is using grant funds to develop a bridge curriculum for women of color and plans to offer that curriculum at the Youth Opportunities Center and area one-stops. It has also created a "career exploratorium" on managing a high-tech environment. As the leadership is aware, success depends on scaling up these programs.

To respond effectively to economic forces and integrate innovations into mainstream programs, PCC needs to engage employers in the development of revised curricula. The funding structure based on FTE limits PCC's ability to improve and expand education and training programs for low-income people. Improved policy with appropriate funding is central to continuous improvement. To make more informed policy decisions at the local level, administrators feel that the state needs to fund longer-term impact studies of short-term training programs. Pamela Murray, the director of the Steps to Success program, believes low-income individuals need programs that can free up some of their time while they work on skill development. She sums up the necessary next steps for PCC: "In Portland, we need to scan the available resources to make this a reality and work together using a team approach with representatives from the business, education, and nonprofit sectors."

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Interviews

Central Piedmont Community College

Bell, Thomas E. Director, Human Resources, Okuma American Corporation

Boone, Babett. Director, City of Charlotte Aviation Department

Burns, Robert. Labor Market Analyst, Employment Security Commission of North Carolina

Cramer, Kit. Group Vice President/Education, Charlotte Chamber

Dodson, David L. President, MDC

Drumm, Kathy H. Executive Vice President, Central Piedmont Community College

Friday, William C. President Emeritus, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Gennett, Nicholas D. Vice President Education, Support Services, Central Piedmont Community College

Gray, Carol. President, Charlotte Chamber of Commerce

Hackley, Lloyd V. Former Chancellor, North Carolina Community College System

Hopper, Linda. Charlotte Site Manager, Solectron

Johnston, Cynthia W. Dean, Northeast Campus/Community Development, Central Piedmont Community College

Koehneke, Paul. Dean, Corporate and Continuing Education, Central Piedmont Community College

Miller, Kerry Rushin. Director, Training Center, Urban League of Central Carolinas, Inc.

Nash, Pat. Director, Career Center, Central Piedmont Community College

Paneitz, Becky H. Vice President for Instruction, Central Piedmont Community College

Rhew, David. Assistant to the President, Community Relations, Central Piedmont Community College

Rubin, Sarah. MDC

Sidler, Andrea. Regional Training Manager, Solectron

Simpson, Ralph. Ralph Simpson & Associates, Inc., Public Relations and Public Affairs Council

Stone, Randall L. Duke Energy Training

Townley, Rod. Dean, Information Technology and Instructional Development, Central Piedmont Community College

Zeiss, P. Anthony. President, Central Piedmont Community College

Portland Community College

Ball, John. President, Worksystems, Inc.

Blakely, Randall. Director, PCC Skill Center, Portland Community College

Christopher, William. Executive Dean, Rock Creek Campus, Portland Community College

Dins, Kate. Director, Workforce Development Programs, Southeast Center, Portland Community College

Greenfield, Terri. Division Dean, CIS and Telecommunications, Cascade Campus, Portland Community College

Harris, Judy. Director, Institute for Health Professionals, CPWTC, Portland Community College

Huddle, Linda. Manager of Vocational Programs., Alternative Learning Opportunities, Southeast Center, Portland Community College

Jacobsen, Alice. Executive Dean, Sylvania Campus, Portland Community College

Lawyer, Carmen. Educational Program Coordinator, Central Portland Workforce Training Center

Manley, Bill. Director, PAVTEC Consortium

Miller, Al. Deputy Director, Business Education Compact

Moriarty, Daniel. President, Portland Community College.

Murray, Pamela. Director, Workforce Development Programs and Steps to Success, Portland Community College

Nisson, Blaine. Dean, Student Development, Rock Creek Campus, Portland Community College

Ollee, Mildred. Executive Dean, Cascade Campus, Portland Community College

Poppe, Nan. Dean of Adult and Continuing Education, Portland Community College

Reis, Sally. Program Manager, High Performance Learning Project, National Association of Workforce Investment Boards

Reisser, Linda. Dean, Student Development, Cascade Campus, Portland Community College

Roberts, Edward. Manager of Curriculum for Alternative Programs, Portland Community College

Soderberf, Heidi. Executive Director, Southeast Works Neighborhood Jobs Center/One Stop

Staff at the Youth Opportunity Center

Triplett, Jeff. Division Dean, Machine Technology, Sylvania Campus, Portland Community College

Watkins, Kristin. Director, Grants Office, Portland Community College

Wild, Paul. Manager of Training and Development, Customized Workforce Training, CAPITAL Center

Williams, Rosie. Workforce Development Liaison, Mayor's Office, City of Portland.

Protocol for On-Site Interviews

Individuals to be Interviewed

Key contact person:_____

Initial phone call with key contact to generate list of relevant individuals for 45-minute interviews.

POSSIBLE INTERNAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE STAFF	
Individual:	**Schedule:**
President	
Vice President	
Dean of Continuing Education	
Dean of Workforce Development	
Dean of Student Support Services	
Community Outreach Coordinator	
Business Outreach Coordinator	
Governmental Relations Liaison	
One-stop Center Director	

POSSIBLE EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER	
Individual:	**Schedule:**
State Legislative Staff	
Economic Development Board Member	
Union Representative	
Community-based Organization Staff	
Advocacy Organization Staff	
Workforce Investment Board Member	
Business/Industry Representatives	
Accrediting Agency	

Part One: Promising Practice

Definition: One major piece of our study focuses on promising practices that provide both educational advancement and economic opportunity for low-income youth and adults. Typically these part-time students are in need of immediate economic pay-off. We are looking for ways that community colleges help low-income youth and adults develop initial skills needed for entry into programs and how they develop ongoing skills tied to educational and economic advancement. We have identified five promising practices that lead toward that goal.

Central questions: What is the college doing to better serve the needs of this population? What are the recent innovations? How many dovetail with the following promising practices?

PROMPTS FOR PROMISING PRACTICES DISCUSSIONS	
1. Partnerships External stakeholders Motivation (both internal and external) Involvement in the change process	
2. Seamless Systems Connection between education and workforce development Connection between credit and noncredit	
3. Competency-based Credentialing and Certification Modular components building towards certificates, career ladders, and degrees	
4. Innovative Teaching Practices Integration of ESL and remedial programs in to education programs Hands-on learning opportunities	
5. Structured Outreach and Support Access, retention, and advancement opportunities Role of outside agencies in providing supports	

Part Two: Drivers of Change

Definition: We are interested in identifying the role of people and forces outside the institution that lead to a changed approach to serving the needs of low-wage youth and adults.

Central questions: What changes have you made to better serve the academic and workforce development needs of low-income youth and adult? What evidence do you have of success? What forces, institutions, or peop0le contributed to creating, implementing, or sustaining change?

PROMPTS FOR CHANGE DISCUSSION	
6. Motivation On the part of the community college On the part of external drivers	
7. Benefit To low-wage youth and adults	

To the community college To external partners	
8. Evidence of Success Enrollment and completion rates Job placement Starting salary rates Retention Access to career ladder	
9. Mission of community college Connection to Redefined	
10. Lessons learned Change process Work with external drivers	

Part Three: Role Of State Policy in the Change Process

Definition: We are particularly interested in the role that state policy plays in the change process and in serving the educational and economic needs of low-income youth and adults at community colleges.

Central Question: What key state policies have encouraged or hindered changes in community colleges working to serve the economic and educational needs of low-wage youth and adults. What role has the community college played in shaping legislative policy? What are possible levers to pull to change state policy so that community colleges can better serve this population?

PROMPTS FOR POLICY DISCUSSION	
11. Specific to community college: Governance Funding Definition of mission Performance measures	
12. TANF Regulations Eligibility Training	

Economic Development	

Part Four: External View from Key Stakeholders

Definition: We are interested in the role that outside forces, institutions, and individuals played in pushing for change to better serve the academic and economic needs of low-wage workers in community college settings?

Central questions: What specific role did you play in pushing change to better sere the academic and economic needs of your constituents?

PROMPTS FOR EXTERNAL DRIVERS DISCUSSION	
13. Results On constituents Evidence of effectiveness	
14. Level of work for change Individual community colleges Regional consortiums State policy	
15. **Other partners** Economic development agencies Individual businesses Unions Workforce Investment Boards	
16. Lessons learned Effective strategies Obstacles encountered Advice Model for connecting community colleges with business, the community, and the economy	

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